

Special points of interest:

- * Mentoring in higher education institutions is essential
- * Mentoring can be for better or for worse
- * The capability model for work
- * Value of extraordinary appointments
- * The potential of inclusion
- * Global and content occupation insecurity

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Mentoring: For Better or For Worse?

Mentoring in higher education institutions (HEIs) is essential to enhance employees' sustainable employability and attain such institutions' goals. Providing career and psychosocial support to a relatively less experienced mentee (in a specific domain) is the essence of mentoring. Notably, today's academic workers, work, and workplaces are so challenged that thoughts and actions around capabilities, well-being, and success are needed. Great mentors inspire, encourage, and support others in pursuing their dreams and achieving their full potential. In contrast, mentoring for compliance attempts to move an individual toward an externally defined objective. A deep and vibrant relationship is essential to helping others achieve sustained, desired change. Authentic connection and positive emotions are the hallmarks of a deep and vibrant relationship.

Finding a mentor at work can help you build many essential capabilities. However, mentoring can be for better or for worse. Mentoring for better can result in mentees feeling valued and adding value, work capabilities and flourishing at work, which create a virtuous circle. Mentoring for worse results in marginalisation



and exclusion, a lack of work capabilities, and languishing, which create a vicious circle. The positive outcomes of mentoring stretch far beyond personal development for the people involved in the mentorships. Workplace mentoring for better benefits institutions by increasing work engagement, a strong institutional citizenship behaviour, and employee retention.

For mentoring to succeed, mentors and mentees should be prepared for the mentoring relationship. Therefore, Optentia is currently finalising short courses for academic mentors and mentees. Regarding the short course for academic mentors, we included five outcomes: a) Success in academic work and contextual factors that affect professionals in HEIs; b) A model of

capabilities (considering demands, resources, and conversion factors) to understand and promote the agency, achievements, health and well-being of academics in HEIs; c) Different aspects of transitions commonly experienced by academics in HEIs and using mentorship to support skills development directed at engagement with diverse audiences; d) Change management applicable to mentoring and coaching, and e) Interpersonal competence to engage in conversations with mentees in HEIs.

Performance of Optentia

A total of 43 permanent staff members, 46 Master's students, 49 PhD students, and two post-doctoral fellows participate in Optentia. From May 2022 to May 2023, 29 (6 PhD and 23 Master's) students completed their studies. A total of 8 master's 7 PhD students submitted their dissertations and theses for examination in November 2022. Optentia researchers have published 71.85 peer-reviewed articles, 23.83 peer-reviewed chapters in books, and 9.83 peer-reviewed conference papers during 2022.

Participants in Optentia have published over 245 PRA equivalents from 2020 to 2022. Our annual PRA equivalents were 68.37(2020), 78.69 (2021), and 98.09 (2022). Of these, Optentia participants published more than 95% of their peer-reviewed



articles in Scopus and Web of Science citation indices. Annual increases were the highest for 2019 (56%), followed by 2022 (24.63%), 2020 (20.22%) and 2021 (15.09%).

"Optentia participants published more than 95% of their peer-reviewed articles in Scopus and Web of Science citation indices ..."

The Optentia Scorecard *by* Prof. Ian Rothmann

Output	2021	2022	2023
Peer-reviewed article equivalents	78.69	98.09*	21.14
Papers: Conferences	26	9	
Participating Master's students	22	34	46
Completed Master's students	22	23	
Participating PhD students	46	52	49
Completed PhD students	2	6	8
Post-doctoral fellows	1	1	2
Number of workshops presented	13	10	13
Number of workshop participants	700	250	442

Note: Statistics on 20 May 2023

* Not audited

Capability Development at Optentia

Optentia has presented various webinars and programmes to build the competencies of participants during 2023. The following events took place in 2023:

- Prestige lecture - The sound of justice: Prof. J. van der Klink (January 2023).
- Prestige lecture: Prof. D. van Greunen (February 2023).
- Workplace diversity - Prof. J. van Assche (March 2023).
- Co-creating a research agenda on LTC in Southern Africa - Prof. J. Hoffman (March 2023).
- Bayes for Beginners - Prof. C. Geiser (March-April 2023).
- Machine Learning Algorithms for Psychological Assessment: New Technology and Old Notions.- Prof. M. Born (April 2023).
- Multiple Identities - Prof. M. Born (April 2023).
- Situational Judgement Tests - Prof. M. Born (April 2023).
- R training - Prof. Duco Veen (April 2023).
- Longitudinal data collection, community care and partnerships - Prof. J. Sanmartin Berglund (April 2023).
- Being a successful mentor and mentee - Prof. S. Rothmann, Prof. M. Nel and Dr N. Barnard (April/May 2023)
- Writing dissertations and theses: The Monograph or article model? - Prof. S. Rothmann (May 2023).
- Being a successful mentor and mentee Prof. S. Rothmann and Dr N. Barnard (May 2023)



"The two short courses will be presented from August 2023 in a hybrid format ..."

Short Courses for Academic Mentors and Mentees!

Prof. Ian Rothmann, Dr Neil Barnard and Ms Anjonet Jordaan of the Optentia are developing two short courses, namely Being a Successful Academic Mentee and Being a Successful Academic Mentor. The outcomes of the two short courses are::

Being a Successful Mentee

- Integrated knowledge of and the ability to evaluate the contextual factors that impact professionals in HEIs.
- Ability to apply knowledge about a model of capabilities, and to understand agency, achievements, health, and well-being of academics in HEIs.
- Critical understanding of what is required of a mentee in a mentorship relationship and

preparing for such a relationship.

- Integrated knowledge and application of a personal model of change applicable to a mentorship relationship.

Being a Successful Mentor

- Integrated knowledge of and the ability to evaluate the contextual factors that impact professionals in HEIs.
- Ability to apply knowledge about a model of capabilities) to understand and promote the agency, achievements, health and well-being of academics in HEIs.
- Integrated knowledge of a model of interpersonal competence and skills to engage in conversations with mentees in HEIs.
- Critical understanding of a model of change management applicable to mentoring and coaching.
- Integrated knowledge and understanding of different aspects of transitions commonly experienced by academics in HEIs.
- Integrated knowledge of and skills in using mentorship to support skills development directed at engagement with diverse audiences, e.g., clarity about purpose in engaging and real understanding of audiences' needs.

The two short courses will be presented from August 2023 in a hybrid format.

Personnel Psychology Expert Presented Three Lectures at Optentia

Prof. Marise Born, an expert in Personnel Psychology, recently visited the North-West University. On 24 April 2023, Prof. Born is Full Professor of Personnel Psychology at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands. She also is Extraordinary Professor of Industrial and Personnel Psychology at the Free University Amsterdam and an extraordinary Professor at the North-West University, South Africa.

Her research interests are in the domains of personnel selection, cross-cultural psychology, test development and assessment, big data and algorithms in psychological assessment, and personality and individual differences.

Prof. Born presented three lectures to Optentia participants and Honours students in Industrial Psychology, Human Resource Management and Labour Rela-

tions Management. The topics of the three lectures were as follows:

- Situational Judgment Tests Work, But How? The lecture focused on which taxonomy should be used to determine the perceptions of situations, responses, choice of instructions, the scoring method, and advantages of situational judgement tests. She pointed out that situational judgement tests differentiate between average and low performers. Click [here](#) to view the slides of the presentation.
- Identity: Our Multiple Faces. Her lecture focused on psychological basics, multiple faces, and culture and identity. Click [here](#) to view the slides of the presentation.
- Algorithms for Psychological Assessment: New Technology

and Old Notions. In this lecture, she focused on algorithms and psychological assessment, whether the algorithm lives up to its promise, predicting an outcome ('the criterion'), mimicking the thinking process of assessors, intentional or controllable responses, and the algorithm, the organisation, and society. Click [here](#) to view the slides of the presentation. We interviewed Prof. Born about the topic. Click [here](#) to watch the video.

Prof. Marise found it exciting to present her lectures in the garden at Optentia House. We appreciate her commitment to build the capabilities of Optentia participants and students!

"Her lecture focused on psychological basics, multiple faces, and culture and identity."



Optentia staff members, Honours students in Industrial Psychology, Human Resource Management and Labour Relations Management with Prof. Marise Born

The Capability Model of Work: The Sound of Justice

Over the past five years, Optentia Research Unit has conducted various research projects about sustainable employment, specifically using the Capability Model of Work. Prof. Jac van der Klink, an extraordinary professor in Optentia, recently delivered a prestigious lecture at North-West University in support of this research. His lecture, '[The Sound of Justice](#)', examined social justice from the perspective of contributive justice (in contrast to distributive justice).

The purpose of science, according to Prof. van der Klink, is to improve the world, not just explain and analyse it. This is consistent with the discipline of occupational practice and the professionals who work in it, who strive to create flourishing work rather than simply comprehend why work is frequently degrading.

According to him, science must provide practical tools to assist professionals in their work. Prof. van der Klink advocated for a theory and practice that prioritises social justice over financial-economic goals. This corresponds to the capability approach, focusing on a valuable and valued life and normativity, diversity, and contextuality as

core values. He explained that contributive (and not only distributive) justice is important to provide opportunities for an inclusive and diversified (work) environment.

You can watch a short video about the Sound of Justice [here](#).



Prof. Jac van der Klink

"The purpose of science is to improve the world, not just explain and analyse it."



Prof. Mirna Nel, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Andries Baart, Prof. Jaco Hoffman, Dr Japie Greeff, Prof. Leoni van der Vaart, Prof. Blessed Ngwenya, Prof. Dumi Moyo and Prof. Jac van der Klink

Optentia Celebrates the Achievements of PhDs

The Covid-19 pandemic negatively affected Optentia students' completion of their PhDs. In fact, only one PhD per year completed their PhD studies at Optentia in 2020 and 2021. During 2022, the following PhD candidates completed their studies: Dr Christiaan Bekker (Psychology); Dr Tessa de Wet and Dr Annelisa Murangi (Industrial Psychology); Dr Amanda Erasmus and Dr Deon Kleynhans (Human Resource Management), and Dr Eugeny Hennicks (Labour Relations Management).

During 2023, the following PhD students completed their studies: Dr Neil Barnard (Industrial Psychology); Dr Thapelo Chachaa (Human Resource Management); Dr Marina Basson (Sociology); Dr M. Erasmus (Psychology); Dr P. Mokgathe and Dr N. Volschenk. (Learner Development). Furthermore, Suzette Ragadu submitted her PhD in Industrial Psychology in April 2023.

Dr Thapelo Chachaa described his PhD study as "a journey of personal endurance, learning, reflection, and resilience, which builds your character, and you learn to become an expert in your field and research

topic." He said that he was happy that he took the journey.

Dr Lynelle Coxen indicated that her PhD journey had taught her that perseverance, hard work, and self-discipline are vital for success. She said: "Although the journey can be very isolating and feel like an emotional rollercoaster, the learning, growth, and development I got from my PhD journey is like nothing I have experienced before."

Dr Marina Basson wrote: "During the academic journey of completing my PhD, I often felt like giving up and walking away. The challenge seemed insurmountable and beyond my capabilities and my energy. However, with the most dedicated and committed promotor Prof Jacques Rothmann and co-promotor Prof. Werner Nell, I was dragged, kicking, and screaming over the finish line, and for that – I am eternally grateful.

Dr Neil Barnard expressed his experiences as follows: "My PhD journey emphasised the importance of having a strong why (reason you are doing it) and support structure (not going at it alone) when taking on

a challenging task such as doctoral studies. Doctoral research has obstacles, struggles, victories, doubts, and growth. Had it not been for my strong why and support team, I probably would not have persevered. I am forever grateful for the PhD journey and what it taught me about myself, research, and the Work and Organisational Psychology field.

Suzette Ragadu wrote: "My PhD journey has been an incredible growth path, full of emotional experiences, that ranged between self-doubt, determination, resilience, and courage. It humbled me to realise how little still I know and what I can still learn. It was a journey of taking the chance, having the courage and fitting support to pull me through the drift, and conquering the immensity. A journey of wanting to make a difference with an impact, has impacted my being in ways beyond measure. It could not have been done without the unwavering support of the gentle giant academic, my supervisor."

"My PhD journey emphasised the importance of having a strong why and support structure when taking on a challenging task such as doctoral studies."



Optentia celebrating the achievements of PhD candidates during April 2023

Developing Capabilities: Value of Extraordinary Professors

Optentia is privileged to have excellent extraordinary professors who are investing their time and resources to support capability development of the North-West University staff and students, and specifically Optentia participants.

Over the last few years, extraordinary professors made the following contributions:

- Involvement as co-promoters for PhD studies. Their inputs contributed significantly to increasing the quality of studies.
- Knowledge and skill building of staff members and students. Prestige lectures, workshops and mentoring and coaching of staff members and students contribute to their capability development.
- Partnering in peer-reviewed publications and funding applications. Capitalising on the mentorship and coaching opportunities provided by extraordinary staff, Optentia participants publish in higher quality peer-reviewed journals.

Various extraordinary professors were appointed. recently We welcome Prof. Norman Duncan, Prof. Eugene Davids, Prof. Leoni van der Vaart and Prof. Laura Weiss. We also welcome the appointment of Dr Tessa de Wet and Dr Annelisa Murangi who were appointed as extraordinary researchers at Optentia.



Dr Neil Barnard, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Dr Annelisa Murangi, Prof. Jac van der Klink and Suzette Ragadu



Prof. Andries Baart assisting NOW staff members and students with research



Prof. Andries Baart
Precarity and Precarization: An Introduction to promising prospects for understanding Social Issues.

The Faculty of Humanities in collaboration with the Optentia Research Unit presents a Lecture on
Precarity and Precarization: An Introduction to promising prospects for understanding Social Issues
by
Professor Andries Baart

DATE: 13 February 2023 at 11:00 to 12:00
PLACE: Building 41 (new Admin Building), Council Room 131, Vanderbijlpark Campus or on Zoom
RSVP: Please confirm your attendance at Lynn.Booyens@nwu.ac.za and indicate in person or online.

It is not unusual to analyse (and seek to solve) social problems by drawing on a wide range of distinct theoretical perspectives. Theories or theoretical perspectives on poverty, marginalisation, exclusion, vulnerability, degradation, and social inequality come to mind. There are also even broader theories on the functioning of the market, the impact of neoliberalism, growing social and cultural inequality, the penetration of public life, and increasing individualization to be drawn upon. These theories contribute much to both our understanding of and interventions in current (or social) issues. They are however seldom used in conjunction with each other.

In recent decades, a number of these perspectives have been drawn together into a single modern and critical theory, namely the Contemporary Processes of Precarization. It, from the outset, considers the interrelationships between seemingly disparate social issues.

This presentation will briefly introduce a Theory of Precarity and Precarization and aims to provide an outline of its possibilities. Although with a little-known approach to understanding social issues, it offers promising and innovative prospects to tackle the South African reality in all its complexity.

Bio
Prof. dr A.J. (Andries) Baart studied social sciences in Amsterdam, specialised in the field of practical theology (Unioct and Nieuwkoop), and was awarded a Doctorate in Philosophy (Radboud). He has held the Professorial Chair in Practical Theology at the Catholic Theological University of Unioct from 1991-2006, in Presence and Care in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Trier from 2007-2012 and at the University of the Humanities in Unioct, from 2012-2015. He is Extraordinary Professor at the Optentia Research Unit, North-West University, South Africa (since 2015) and Visiting Professor at the Department Psychiatry, UMC – University Medical Center Unioct (2015 -). Since 2014 he has been working with and for the Streeklief (Presence) Foundation. He is the founding father/creator of the Theory of Presence. He undertakes intensive field, theoretical and foundational research in the broad area of care, wellbeing and service provision, and of spiritual care, in particular for the socially vulnerable, and in connection with the ethics of care.

Prof. Andries Baart presented various workshops to build research capabilities of staff members and students

“Capitalising on the mentorship and coaching opportunities provided by extraordinary staff, Optentia participants publish in higher quality peer-reviewed journals.”

“A Rose from the Concrete” – The Potential of Inclusion

The International Health Awareness Network (IHAN), a UN-affiliated NGO based in New York and represented by its founding President, Dr Sorosh Roshan (Honoris Causa, Doctor of Science, Lehman College, CUNY, USA) partnered with Prof. Blessed Ngwenya (Optentia Research Unit's Programme on Social Inclusion, Optimal Functioning and Decolonising Praxis) and Prof. Jaco Hoffman to hand over R 200 000 worth of Galaxy Tablets to Eloff Primary school for educational purposes.

This initiative was co-conceptualized by the teachers at the school under the leadership of the Deputy Principal, Ms Amanda Labuschagne. This is a pilot project and IHAN hopes to make such donations to around 100 schools in Africa, a continent whose limited access to digital technologies and traditional pedagogic heritage is possibly the main barriers to digital transformation.

That digital devices together with internet access and digital literacy are the primary drivers that make digital transformation essential for education in the 21st century is no longer a subject for debate. It was therefore befitting for Optentia working together with IHAN to provide opportunities for learners of Eloff Primary School near Delmas, Mpumalanga to accelerate digitalisation and create a new learning environment through these tablets.

Eloff Primary school constitutes learners from diverse backgrounds and has a significant number of its students coming from underprivileged communities living in informal settlements in the area. The school and its hard-working teachers are strained for resources and such donations and

collaborations go a long way in eliminating structural barriers to access and use of technology while at the same time collapsing the transactional distance between learners and their teachers.

IHAN's generous gesture chimes well with Optentia's Social Inclusion, Optimal Functioning and Decolonial Praxis programme's goals which pursue the enhancement of the capabilities of diverse individuals, groups, and institutions and the strategies for working with a wide range of individual differences and creating caring, enabling and inclusive contexts which allow them to flourish. It is with great hope that the scheme will contribute positively to NWU's co-creation research goals and community engagement pursuits. But, most importantly, the anticipation is that this ges-

ture marks the beginning of equitable access and use of digital technologies and their associated opportunities for everyone and particularly the learners of Eloff Primary School who, due to their underprivileged situation, could be a 'rose that grow out of concrete'.

Written by: Prof. Blessed Ngwenya and Prof. Jaco Hoffman

“... limited access to digital technologies and traditional pedagogic heritage is possibly the main barriers to digital transformation”



Prof. Blessed Ngwenya and a learner of Eloff Primary School



Dr Sorosh Roshan (Founding President of the UN affiliated International Health Awareness Network), Prof. Jaco Hoffman, Ms Amanda Labuschagne (Deputy Principal, Eloff Primary School) and Prof. Blessed Ngwenya

Engaging with Tygerberg Forum for Industrial Psychologists

Prof. Ian Rothmann was recently invited to present a workshop to the Tygerberg Forum for Industrial Psychologists. The workshop, which took place on 11 May 2023, focused on pathways from precarity to capability of employees. The following topics were addressed:

- The changing world of work.
- Work, health and well-being.
- Approaches to study health and well-being.
- The capability approach.
- Research findings.

As moral justification for greater engagement with humanitarian concerns and as a guide to navigate the difficult ethical quandaries involved in doing so, industrial psychologists should consider the capability approach. The presentation can be downloaded [here](#).



Dr. Hannes Swart (Tygerberg Forum for Industrial Psychologists) and Prof. Ian Rothmann

“After futile attempts to make leaders take sustainable decisions, I recently turned my focus to people behaviours ...”

Optentia Welcomes Prof. Norman Duncan

We are delighted to welcome Prof. Norman Duncan as an Extraordinary Professor at the Optentia Research Unit in the Ageing and Generational Dynamics in Africa Research programme. Prof. Duncan is a clinical psychologist with a keen interest in optimising human development across the life course in contexts of adversity, focussing specifically on previously marginalised groups of people. In his more than 30-year career, Prof. Duncan contributed to influential journals, edited books, journal editorials, and book chapters on topics related to political violence, racialised social interactions, collective violence, structural inequality, poverty, apartheid archives, and mentoring of

Black scholars in the higher education context.

The North-West University more widely will also benefit from Prof. Duncan's in-depth knowledge of higher education in South Africa drawn from his experience as a senior academic administrator at various South African universities, as well as from his rigorous academic scholarship, confirmed by his appointment as Editor-in-Chief of the South African Journal of Psychology (SAJP). Under his NWU affiliation, Prof. Duncan is revising the book, *Community Psychology: Analysis, Context and Action*, with Prof. Vera Roos (NWU) and Prof. Jace Pillay (UJ). Norman is also supervising Linda Dennis with Vera towards com-

pletion of a PhD in Social Sciences with Relational Dynamics and Development. A heart-felt welcome to you, Norman!



Prof. Norman Duncan

Global and Content Occupation Insecurity *by* Prof. Lara Roll

“Global occupation insecurity occurs when a person fears that their entire occupation might vanish due to automation.”

The introduction of ChatGPT has sparked conversations surrounding the vast potential of automation. While it presents numerous advantages, such as enhanced efficiency and elimination of repetitive tasks, automation could also drastically alter or even replace entire professions. ChatGPT's emergence stirs curiosity, but it is evident that this technology will soon affect our professional lives. Frey and Osborne's well-known study estimated that 47% of US jobs could be automated within the next 20 years, a trend that has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

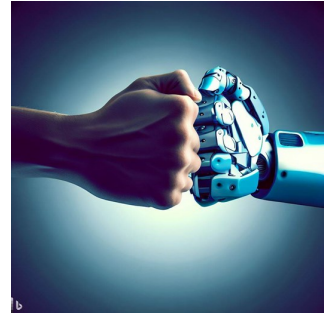
At KU Leuven (Belgium), we have developed a scale to measure employees' fears of their occupations disappearing or changing significantly due to automation. It's crucial to differentiate between a 'job' and an 'occupation': a job is a specific role within an organization, while an occupation refers to the profession an individual has trained for. As an illustration, the occupation of accounting necessitates passing a rigorous examination and fulfilling specific education and experience prerequisites. It involves performing particular duties while working as an accountant in a particular organization. The automation of various accounting aspects, such as bookkeeping and data entry, due to technological advancements implies that fewer accountants may be required in the future, or that accountants will need to possess a distinct set of skills than they do presently.

Therefore, we identify two types of occupation insecurity: global and content. Global occupation insecurity occurs when a

person fears that their entire occupation might vanish due to automation. For example, workers in industries such as retail may worry that automation will replace human cashiers with self-checkout machines, while professionals in language services may be concerned that machine translation software will eliminate the need for human translators. Content occupation insecurity, on the other hand, is the concern that automation will cause significant changes to tasks and responsibilities within an occupation. For instance, graphic designers may worry that advances in artificial intelligence will make their specialized design skills less valuable, while also creating new demands for skills related to designing for virtual and augmented reality applications.

To measure these insecurities, we created the Occupation Insecurity Scale (OCIS), which can be [downloaded](#) in various languages. We collected data from Belgium (Flanders), Germany, the UK, USA, and China (5,080 participants in total), with the results showing that 16.8% of employees experienced global occupation insecurity, while a remarkable 51.3% experienced content occupation insecurity.

Our study found that males were more concerned about both types of insecurity, possibly because female-dominated jobs, like those in education and healthcare, have a lower risk of automation. People with higher education levels also displayed more anxiety, as they may be more aware of automation's potential or more frequently work with automated processes. Surprisingly, younger and middle-aged generations (18-49 years old) were more fearful



than those aged 50-65 years old, who may believe they'll retire before facing the challenges of automation. Both global and content occupation insecurity were linked to higher levels of burnout, decreased job satisfaction, reduced work engagement, poorer physical and mental health, and lower self-rated job performance.

Collaboration among policy makers, employers, and workers is crucial to shape the impact of automation in a way that aligns with our goals as a society. We have a unique opportunity to determine the future of automation, but it requires making deliberate choices. If we do not make these choices, the effects of automation will happen to us rather than being under our control. Thus, taking proactive steps is essential to ensure that automation will develop to our benefit.

Acknowledgement: This research was funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 896341.

Reference: Roll, L. C., De Witte, H., & Wang, H. J. (2023). Conceptualization and Validation of the Occupation Insecurity Scale (OCIS): Measuring Employees' Occupation Insecurity Due to Automation. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(3), 2589.

Prof Duco Veen Presents Rstudio Training at Optentia

Prof. Duco Veen of Utrecht University in the Netherlands and an extraordinary professor in Optentia recently visited Optentia to present Rstudio training to researchers in the entity. RStudio is an integrated development environment for R, a programming language for statistical computing and graphics.



Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Duco Veen and Dr. Neil Barnard

How Does Research Impact Your Everyday Life?

On 7 February 2023, Prof. Darelle van Greunen, an extraordinary professor in Optentia, presented a prestige lecture. Prof. van Greunen is a Distinguished Professor and multidisciplinary researcher leading the Centre for Community Technologies at Nelson Mandela University that develops "ICT solutions for Africa, by Africans in Africa". Under her leadership, her group has developed more than 30 mobile applications and websites in the Health, Education and Agriculture sectors for use by marginalised communities. Her group engages with scholars and low literacy communities and has presented skills training to more than 400 scholars and community members over the past five years. Prof. van Greunen holds a PhD in Computer Science from the University of South Africa.

According to Prof. van Greunen. Without research, we would be defenceless to the forces of nature. For example, without meteorology, we would be unable



Prof. Darelle van Greunen with NWU and Optentia Staff who attended her prestige lecture

to predict the path of violent storms, hurricanes and tornadoes, while a lack of volcanology research would leave a huge proportion of the world susceptible to the destruction of volcanic eruptions. Medical technology and discovery would be non-existent – no anaesthetic, no birth control, no X-Ray machine, no insulin, no IVF, no penicillin, no germ theory, no DNA, and no COVID vaccination. How do we use research to also enhance Education 4.0 and en-

sure our students are prepared for work and technological enhancements. During the lecture, she shared some insights from her research to demonstrate how you can have research impact on everyday life in our different communities. She also explained how we could turn this impactful research into peer-reviewed publications.

**"Without research,
we would be
defenceless to the
forces of
nature ..."**

Critiques and Criticisms of Positive Psychology *by* Prof. L.E. van Zyl

“Critics of positive psychology have questioned various aspects of the discipline...”

Positive psychology is a subdiscipline of psychology that is specifically focused on promoting the conditions associated with the wellbeing, happiness, and optimal functioning of individuals, communities, and institutions. Since its inception, positive psychology has resulted in many new theories and approaches that explain, measure and promote the optimal conditions necessary for individuals to flourish and institutions to thrive. It also spawned several subdisciplines ranging from positive organisational scholarship to positive computing. As one of the fastest-growing areas within psychology, its enjoyed tremendous support from not only the academy but also within practice due to its distinct focus on what works well, rather than what's wrong (Wang et al., 2023). Despite this support, positive psychology has also been criticised over the past two decades. Critics of positive psychology have questioned various aspects of the discipline, ranging from the uniqueness of contribution to understanding human behaviour to the legitimacy of the philosophies, theories, techniques, and interventions it is based on.

In a recent systematic literature review on the critiques and criticisms of positive psychology, Van Zyl et al. (2023) identified 117 distinct issues within positive psychology, which they categorised into six broad themes. They found that positive psychology:

- Lacks proper theorising and conceptual thinking. Critics argue that positive psychology does not have a unifying metatheory and fails to provide a clear set of ideas on

how positive psychological phenomena should be conceptualised or approached. This criticism raises concerns about the validity of the philosophies and theories underpinning positive psychology.

- It has issues with measuring positive psychological constructs and the research methodologies it employs. Critics argue that positive psychology shows poor operationalisation and measurement of its constructs, uses flawed research methods, and over-relies on empiricism/positivism to investigate phenomena. This criticism highlights the need for more rigorous research approaches and better measurement tools to establish the validity of positive psychological constructs, models, tools and interventions.
- Is as a pseudoscience that lacks empirical evidence and shows poor replicability. Critics argue that positive psychology makes false claims about its benefits, exaggerates the implications of findings, and is rife with confirmation bias. This criticism undermines the credibility of positive psychology as a scientific discipline or practice domain.
- Lacks novelty and self-isolates from mainstream or general psychology. Here critics argue that positive psychology does not bring anything new to the proverbial table and that it intentionally created a fictitious divide between “negative” psychol-

ogy and the study of optimal human functioning. Critics argue that by focusing solely on positive emotions, such as happiness and wellbeing, positive psychology fails to address the full range of human emotions and experiences. This narrow focus can lead to an unrealistic and overly optimistic view of human nature. This criticism raises concerns about the relevance of positive psychology within the broader lexicon of psychology.

- Is a decontextualised neoliberal ideology that causes harm. Positive psychology was classified as a neoliberalist ideology where optimal functioning and human flourishing are seen as an individual enterprise and a consequence of one's own life choices. Here, it's argued to neglect the role of the context/environment in its understanding of positive phenomena which in turn causes harm. Some critics also argue that positive psychology can be used to justify social inequality. By suggesting that individuals have control over their own happiness and wellbeing, positive psychology can be seen as ignoring the structural and societal factors that can contribute to negative experiences. This critique highlights the need to consider the broader social context in its attempts to understand human flourishing.

Critiques and Criticisms of Positive Psychology (continued)

While some of these challenges and critiques are not unique to the field, they have sparked significant interest and renewed debate about the discipline's future development. Although the criticisms raised by Van Zyl et al. (2023) provided an initial overview, a more detailed analysis and debate are required to evaluate their validity and implications as a means to generate potential solutions. Such a critical evaluation will not only enhance scientific rigour but also improve the real-world relevance and impact of positive psychology. Additionally, it will encourage a culture of openness and cooperation, fostering constructive conversation and reflection on the difficulties facing the discipline. Ultimately, this will contribute to developing strategies necessary to build the credibility and impact of positive psychology, ensuring it continues to make a valuable contribution to the study of the human condition.

With this in mind, Llewellyn van Zyl (TU/e, the Netherlands) & Bryan Dik (Colorado State University, USA) aim to host a special issue within International [Journal of Applied Positive Psychology](#) on the criticisms and critiques of positive psychology. The special issue aims to invite critics and proponents of positive psychology to reflect upon, debate, and discuss the findings of Van Zyl et al.'s (2023) systematic literature review. Specifically, it aims to collate a series of papers to critically evaluate positive psychology's challenges, debate the validity of each critique/criticism, and present possible solutions to these problems. This special issue invites contributions that reflect upon what is needed to



Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl

facilitate the development of positive psychology as a practice domain (e.g. practice guidelines), as well as highlight what challenges new technological innovations (e.g. Artificial Intelligence), societal changes (e.g. systemic inequalities) and research practices (e.g. Open Sciences) poses to positive psychology. It hopes to collate a series of criticisms, critiques, and developmental opportunities for specific positive psychological phenomena or constructs (e.g. flourishing, grit, strengths) to stimulate and guide future research. Ultimately, this special issue aims to create a platform to promote a constructive dialogue between critics and

proponents of positive psychology to improve the scientific rigour and relevance of the field and to inform future directions. Details about the upcoming special issue are forthcoming.

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Wang, F., Guo, J., & Yang, G. (2023). Study on positive psychology from 1999 to 2021: A bibliometric analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 273.

“This special issue invites contributions that reflect upon what is needed to facilitate the development of positive psychology as a practice domain, as well as highlight what challenges new technological innovations, societal changes and research practices poses to positive psychology.”

Mental Health and Technology *by Dr Japie Greeff*

“The potential impact on the world is not quite understood at this point with some researchers dismissing the tools as merely more effective ways of retrieving data from the internet.”

In March 2023, Dr Japie Greeff was invited to give a presentation at the Tastes of Nuclear Physics XI conference held at the University of the Western Cape. His keynote was entitled “Artificial Intelligence Interventions in Well-being and Mental Healthcare: Exploring Bipolar Disorder”. Great connections were made and it seemed to resonate with the conference attendees that technological advances like machine learning need not only be used in technical fields and for traditional medical purposes, but could also contribute to a growing movement towards mental well-being and care. That said, current advances in the field are creating concern with some people employing tools like large language models into the health and well-being space without them being fully tested from a clinical perspective, which can lead to disastrous consequences! I have been invited to give a plenary session with the title of “Therapy by chatbot? The promise and challenges in using AI for Mental Health. Lived Experiences” at the South African Mental Health Conference (April 2023).

This work has been quite challenging in the last couple of months, as when I embarked on this journey, the largest language models that were publicly available were BERT and its derivatives. The speed at which advancements have been happening in the conversational artificial intelligence space have been incredible, which has led to a large number of international researchers in March composing an open letter directed at the large players in the field, specifically OpenAI, Microsoft and

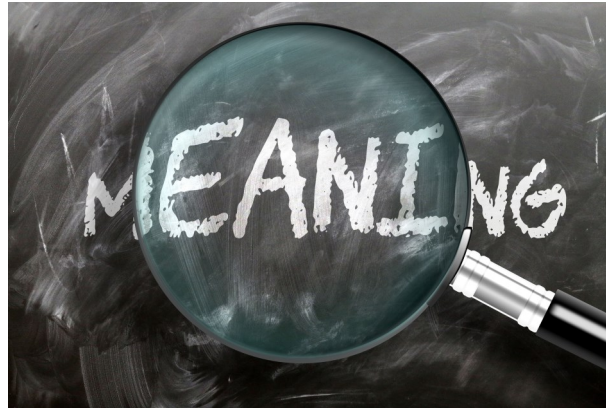
Google imploring them to put a halt on all research and development into these models for at least six months so that the impact of these models can be measured to ensure that we are not creating tremendous and lasting negative impacts on the world in the educational, economic and research space. The initial concern was around chatGPT that was released at the end of November 2022, but this was built on a model called GPT-3.5 (Generative Pre-Trained Transformer) which had already worried some people. In March of 2023 GPT-4 was released which has a substantially more impressive array of capabilities, and at the same time as releasing that model, the team that built it announced that they are already training the next generation of AI that will be released towards the end of 2023. The potential impact on the world is not quite understood at this point with some researchers dismissing the tools as merely more effective ways of retrieving data from the internet, while having other researchers go so far as to announce that it may be required to have a plan in place where we physically bomb datacentres the moment one of these models becomes self aware as it could literally set about a chain of events that could destroy the foundations of our banking and information sectors and plunge us into a nightmare scenario. We should have an open discussion about what these sorts of technologies mean for us in our research, but also for the communities we serve. It is rapidly reaching a point where knowledge of these systems and their abilities may become a way

in which communities are split between those with the abilities to take advantage of the tools to make some tasks that were previously difficult trivially easy, and those that are left behind without this knowledge being taken further and further into a skills-poor future. As someone that is not an expert at graphical prompt engineering, I wanted to see what an AI would think of this idea of technology poverty, so I used Midjourney with the prompt “realistic high resolution image of a rich man with a lot of technology walking past a poor man sitting on the sidewalk with a begging bowl”, and of the variations in art that it gave me, this was my favourite one. I also tried to be a little bit more abstract and see what it would do with “a man standing on a mountain looking proudly up at the sky having reached the top with lots of people looking sad climbing up the mountain looking sick and exhausted”. I still need to get better at using these tools myself on the graphical side of things, but even with my meagre abilities it is interesting to think that in 10 years we will look back on 2023 either as the time when there was hype around something that ended up not being anything significant in the long run, or alternatively it could also be the year that we started the world on a tangent that could end either in anarchy, plentiful opportunities and resources for people who were suddenly enabled to do things that they could only dream of before. It is happening as we speak, so now we just have to see what side of history we are on...

Is There an Innate Need for Meaning *by* Prof. Ruut Veenhoven

In positive psychology, it is generally assumed that we have an innate need for meaning and that we are therefore happier the more meaning we see in our life. Is this theory supported by empirical evidence?

It is at first sight. There perceived meaning in life appears to be strongly correlated to satisfaction with life and that correlation is universal. However, the correlation can also be due to an effect of happiness on perceived meaning, if you are happy you are more inclined to see meaning in your life and a qualitative study found that a lot of people see meaning in leading a happy life. What is more, a lot of people appear not to care about the meaning of their life and are still reasonably happy. So, the quest for seeing meaning in one's life is apparently not universal and nor very pressing. The fact fits better with the view that the quest for meaning is that it is a conse-



quence of human cognition, self-awareness in particular. Because we know that we are, we tend to wonder why we are and whether our life serves any other good beyond our own life. Though these questions come to mind, we can apparently live without convincing answers.

Sameer, Y, Eid, Y & Veenhoven, R (2022) Perceived meaning of life and satisfaction with life: A research synthesis using an on-line findings- Frontiers in Psychology Section Positive Psychology,



Prof. Ruut Veenhoven

“... the correlation can also be due to an effect of happiness on perceived meaning.”

Developing Capabilities *by* Dr Tessa de Wet

After having been exposed to the Capabilities Approach during my PhD, I have had the opportunity to work with a diverse team of people in the agricultural development sphere. The South African Agricultural Development Agency (AGDA) is a young non-profit organisation that strives to facilitate inclusive transformation in the South African agricultural sector through partnering with various organisations to build skills, create access to affordable financing mechanisms and work together to create access to markets to the empowerment of black farmers to become more economically active in main-



Tessa de Wet, Malcolm Ferguson, Tshego Makwela, Leona Archary, Quinton Naidoo, Sam Mutoredzanwa, (front) Nonnie Kunene, Boitumelo Mahlangu and Musandiwa Gededzha.

stream agriculture. In the photo challenge. are some of the team members that have taken on the mammoth

From Community Project to International Peer-reviewed Publication

On 7 February 2023, the launch of Age-Inclusive ICT Innovation for Service Delivery in South Africa: A Developing Country Perspective, edited by Vera and Jaco, was a celebration of a process that came full circle. What started out as a self-funded study to get a sense of older individuals' cell phone use and intra/intergenerational relationships, developed into a fully funded community-based project aimed at developing a technology artefact (Yabelana ICT Ecosystem) to promoting (older) individuals' access to service delivery, and ended in an international peer reviewed publication. This book aligned with the global drive towards age-integrated societies and communities, focusses especially on marginalized older individuals and their active participation in the development of a technology artefact, suitable to address their specific needs for information about services. Watch a video about the book launch [here](#).

"What started out as a self-funded study, developed into a fully funded community-based project aimed at developing a technology artefact."



Prof. Vera Roos and Prof. Jaco Hoffman

Lancet Commission on Long Term Care for Older Persons

Prof. Jaco Hoffman and Prof. Anne-Margriet Pot (co-chair) are appointed as part of 15 commissioners from different regions in the world for the Lancet Commission on 'Long-Term Care for Older Persons' (LCLTC) with the aim to contribute to a unique opportunity to shape the future of the field of long-term care for older persons. Lancet Commissions are not intended to produce state of the art reviews or guidelines, but rather, transformational, strategic science-based advocacy. The Lancet Commission will result in a "call for action" to

researchers, clinicians, policy makers, funders, healthcare planners and other stakeholders to challenge convention and current principles that may be hampering progress. This new Lancet Commission aims to focus on the provision of person-centred long-term care for older persons through a human rights lens. Globally, there is an increasing emphasis on person-centredness as a quality requirement for long-term care provision. While the Healthy Ageing framework of the World Health Organization states that long-term care should be

person-centred, the provision of such care is complex, often misconstrued through an individualistic lens, surrounded by heterogeneity and temporal change, hampered by stigma, and environments that are not supportive. To this end the core question is what is needed to galvanize action and speed up the shift towards the (re)conceptualisation and provision of person-centred care? The commentary, announcing the new Commission can be accessed [here](#):

Sweden/South Africa Collaboration

In April 2023, three colleagues, Prof. Johan Sanmartin Berglund, Prof. Lisa Skär and Prof. Doris Bohman from the Blekinge Institute of Technology visited Optentia. The aims of the visit were twofold, namely, to renew an existing MoU between North-West University (NWU) and to inform colleagues across all three NWU campuses about longitudinal data collection, management, and analyses. To this end a colloquium (3 April 2023) was facilitated by Prof. Jaco Hoffman and Prof. Vera Roos on "Longitudinal data collection, community care and partnerships: Swedish experiences and Swedish/South African prospects for collaboration."

Prof. Johan Sanmartin Berglund is the principal investigator and main coordinator of the The Swedish National study on Ageing and Care (SNAC). He focussed on methodological issues as it pertains to longitudinal research generally, including issues of representability, drop out as well as other challenges along the process. Prof Sanmartin Berglund is also appointed as a special advisor to the Swedish government regarding ageing during the Swedish EU presidency 2023 and shared

future long-term care strategies.

He was joined by Prof. Doris Bohman (Blekinge Institute of Technology and an extraordinary professor in Optentia) and Prof. Lisa Skär (Head of Department, Nursing, Blekinge Institute of Technology). Doris shared Swedish models of community care for older persons, more specifically and Lisa proposed general ideas for future partnerships through the Erasmus and other EU exchange/ funding programmes and the offerings at the Blekinge Institute to support such exchanges.

Prof. Welma Lubbe from the North-West University facilitated

the presence of colleagues from the School of Nursing Science from Mahikeng, namely Dr Molekodi Matsipane (Director), Ms Rorisang Machailo (Deputy Director), Prof Salaminah Moloko-Phiri with the School of Nursing Science at Vanderbijlpark Campus represented by Dr Suegnet Scholtz (Deputy Director). Other attendees were Dr Queen Usadolo (Human Resource Management, Prof Blessed Ngwenya (Optentia Research Unit), Ms Elizabeth Bothma (Optentia Research Unit). We look forward to a productive South/North collaboration!



Prof. Jaco Hoffman, Prof. Doris Bohman, Prof. Lisa Skär and Prof. Sanmartin Berglund

"He focussed on methodological issues pertaining to longitudinal research, including issues of representability, drop out as well as other challenges along the process."

International Psychogeriatric Association

The [International Psychogeriatric Association](#) (IPA) presented a new Debate Series: "Concepts of Aging in Different Cultures and Latitudes", moderated by Dr Edgardo Reich (Hospital Julio Mendez, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina) and Dr Raimundo Mateos (Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Spain). As healthcare has become more widespread and effective, the average lifespan has increased greatly over the last 100 years or more. This

improvement introduces a range of new topics about older adults, including how different cultures understand what ageing means within families and on societal level, healthcare systems, and worldviews. On 10 May 2023, Jaco Hoffman presented a paper at this virtual event with two colleagues, respectively from Israel (Daniela Aisenberg-Shafran, Head, Department of the MA programme for Clinical Psychology of Adulthood and

Aging and Head of the CMA Center for Multigenerational Psychotherapy and Counselling) and Mexico (Francisco Javier Mesa Rios, affiliated to the Instituto Nacional de Psiquiatría "Ramón de la Fuente Muñiz" as Head of the Health Economics Department). They explored what is potentially similar and different in their experiences working with older adults and how the concepts of ageing are understood in each of these contexts.

Design of Teaching *by* Dr Raymond Emekako

The transparent design teaching project has received ethical approval with Dr. Raymond Emekako as the primary investigator. The transparent design of teaching allows for the revealing of teaching and learning intentions between the teacher and the student, allowing all students to have an equal chance of succeeding and increasing their sense of belonging. The project is in the process of obtaining a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning grant to pilot the teaching framework with four modules in two faculties: the Economic and Management Sciences and the Natural and Agricultural Sciences, particularly in the disciplines of Computer Sciences, Information Sciences, Public Management, and Geography. Data from this pilot will form the basis upon which transparent design teaching can be implemented on aligned modules. Additionally, two lecturers from the SOTL project will share their experiences and implement this teaching design in



Dr Raymond Emekako

a teaching mobility project in Africa in the coming months.

“Older persons is an important cohort in society to buttress socio-economic development and they are usually not fully utilized in this regard.”

Conference Presentation: Andrew Banda

Mr Andrew Banda was a speaker at the 17th International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) Conference, co-hosted with the Third International Statistics Institute (ISI) Regional Statistics conference, held between 4th and 6th April, 2023 in Livingstone, Zambia. The conference was hosted under the theme: “Better lives 2030: Mobilising the power of Data for Africa and the World”. Andrew presented a paper titled: Individual and Contextual-level factors associated with Well-being among older Adults in Rural Zambia: A multilevel analysis. This is an excerpt of the research work being conducted under the Ageing and Generational Dynamics in Africa (AGenDA) programme under the leadership of Prof. Jaco Hoffman.

It was immensely exciting representing the research group and learning from the diverse research work being conducted across the globe among a group of multi-disciplinary academics, researchers and professionals.



Andrew Banda presenting at the Third International Statistics Institute Regional Statistics Conference

Andrew Banda, Jaco Hoffman (2023). Individual and Contextual-level factors associated with Well-being among older Adults in Rural Zambia: A multilevel analysis.

Two Social Anthropologists Joined Optentia

Two academics, namely Kile Nkani and Roxanne Mathobie from the School of Social Sciences recently joined Optentia as research participants. Kile is currently a Junior Lecturer for Social Anthropology at the North-West University. She recently completed my Master's in Anthropology at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). In addition, she graduated from UJ with a BA Honours in Anthropology in 2017, as well as a BA in Geography in 2016, interests/focus are on addressing sexual violence, gender relation, expressions of sexuality. Her master's research was centred in addressing the normalisation of sexual violence and gender-based violence within the South African context. She worked with young black women raised in the township, who have also had exposure to multifaceted socio-economic settings, to write ethnographies about their experiences of sexual harassment; and the strategies they use to combat/avoid it.



Kile Nkani

Roxanne is also a junior lecturer in Social Anthropology at the North-West University. She completed Honours and Master's degrees in Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town. Roxanne's research interest is medical anthropology with a focus on mental health and student adaptations to institutional spaces. My first research project explored students help-seeking behavior on campus and found that students learn to embody severe distress in their first year of university as a part of the student experience. Throughout that research period, she was quite intrigued by the way stu-



Roxanne Mathobie

dents were expressing themselves often in extremely self-harming expressions or very brief slang such as 'go-ish-ing'. I then moved on and focused on the linguistic aspect of how students express their feelings of distress and found that humour is used when dealing with distress as a form of coping mechanism.

Optentia welcomes our two new members and we look forward to support them in their academic and research careers.

**"Optentia
welcomes two
social
anthropologists ..."**

News from Prof. Norah Keating

Prof. Norah Keating has recently taken on the role of Chair of the Board of Directors of a National NGO in Canada called the Vanier Institute of the Family.

Prof. Keating recently gave an invited address in Oslo, Norway where she talked about UN Declarations about family responsibilities and well-being. In her lecture, *Environments of Ageing: Toward Leaving No One Behind*,

Prof. Keating discussed the United Nations' focus on families in the Sustainable Development Goals and Decade of Healthy

Ageing. She also presented the Vanier Institute's [Family Diversities and Wellbeing Framework](#), which aims to foster inclusion of

families at risk of marginalisation. Click [here](#) to read more.



Prof. Norah Keating

Introducing New PhD Students in Optentia

Andrew Kavala (Malawi)

Andrew graduated from the University of Malawi with a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities. He later earned his Master of Business Administration (MBA) at The Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi. Andrew is currently studying for a PhD in Social Science with Ageing and Development with the Optentia Research Unit at North-West University.

"My PhD research proposal focuses on how pre-Third Age urban Malawians in both the informal and formal sectors conceptualize their future later-life prospects. I am indeed very excited with my PhD journey, more so, with the mentorship of an awesome and caring Optentia Research Unit Team."

In Malawi, Andrew is the Country Director for MANEPD-a consortium of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) whose aim is to help older men and women to claiming their rights, challenge discrimination, and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives in Malawi.

Kelsey Glass (South Africa)

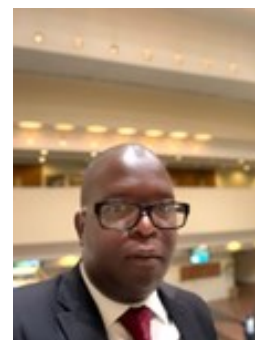
Kelsey is a 1st year PhD student in Ageing and Development at North-West University. She completed her undergraduate degree in Psychology and Sociology, and my honours degree in Demography and Population Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. She then went on to do her master's degree in Gerontology at the University of Southampton in the UK. "Before applying for my PhD, I completed the Short-Learning Program (SLP) through Optentia, which was an invaluable

experience allowing me the confidence and readiness towards my research journey. Attending different lectures, functions, and research training sessions at Optentia has been a great way to be able to network and meet other likeminded people."

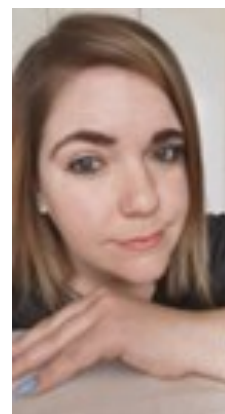
Her research focus is on ageism in mainstream media through critical discourse analysis, under the supervision of Prof. Jaco Hoffman. "I am extremely excited for the road ahead!"

Linda Dennis (New Zealand)

As I embark on my PhD journey, I am filled with trepidation, excitement and gratitude. I am grateful for this remarkable opportunity to nurture my growth and learning through Optentia, under the supervision of Prof. Vera Roos and Prof. Norman Duncan. My journey with Optentia so far, through the Short Learning Programme, has been truly inspiring and academically rewarding. The warmth, support, encouragement and open and engaging discussions facilitated through the group supervision has been hugely beneficial to expanding my frame of reference and way of thinking about the complexity of the real-world problems. "The whole is (definitely) greater than the sum of its parts". My study aims towards providing a meta-theoretical framework of isolation in older people, through reorganising the epistemic characteristics of current definitions of isolation and loneliness and introducing an interactional framework that can guide the development of information communication technology (ICT) as a means to combat isolation.



Andrew Kavala



Kelsey Glass



Linda Dennis

"The warmth, support, encouragement and open and engaging discussions facilitated through the group supervision has been hugely beneficial to expanding my frame of reference..."

Introducing New PhD Students in Optentia

Susan O'Reilly (South Africa)

I am Susan O'Reilly, a married mother of two. My academic background includes a Master's degree in Research Psychology, supervised by Professor Vera Roos. I subsequently gained experience in market research before pursuing a Post Graduate certificate in Education. I taught senior and FET phase students with the goal of combining Social Sciences and Education. Currently, I am privileged to work with Professor Vera once again as part of the Optentia Research Unit. My research interests lie in relationships and values within school



Susan O'Reilly

communities, specifically focusing on respect as a value in the school context. In 2022, I completed the SLP program, and I am thankful for the exposure and experience it provided. I look forward to my PhD journey.

Pan African Parliament (PAP) Workshop

Prof. Jaco Hoffman from the Optentia Research Unit programme on Ageing and Generational Dynamics in Africa (AGeNDA) was invited by the African Union (AU) to facilitate a Capacity Building workshop for Pan Africa Parliament Members of the Committee on Gender, Youth, Family and People with Disability and the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs, Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa on 9-10 March 2023. The workshop dealt with AU Protocols on Ageing, Disabilities, and Social Protection and Social Security. Jaco specifically facilitated the process towards the domestication, within each member state of the AU, of the Strategic Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing that was adopted by the AU Executive Council in July 2022. He was one of the three co-authors of the core document that was further co-created with stakeholders across the continent. NWU's co-created transla-

tional research and community engagement goes far beyond the borders of South Africa. Watch a short video about the workshop [here](#).

Drawing on the PAP workshop the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) in Kenya in conjunction with the Perivoli Africa Research Center (PARC) at the University of Bristol (UoB), United Kingdom (UK) and the North-West University (NWU), South Africa have come together in an initiative to set priority research agendas on long-term care (LTC) systems for older persons, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to inform countries in Africa to implement the Social Agenda 2063 adopted by the AU Executive Council (EX.CL Dec. 1074 (XXXVI) in February 2020. The research agendas are to be jointly defined by stakeholders - from academia, policy, civil society, and practice - through focused virtual co-

creation workshops on each of the three (3) priority areas, of which the ones of WASH and SGBV have already been conducted. The one on LTC systems for older persons will be convened on 30 May 2023 from 13.00-16.00 (CAT).

Your participation in the workshop can be confirmed at through this [Eventbrite link](#):



Prof. Jaco Hoffman

"The workshop dealt with AU Protocols on Ageing, Disabilities, and Social Protection and Social Security."



Dealing with Unemployment: Video Produced for VLIR

A delegation of 138 people from Belgium is joining Their Majesties, the King and the Queen of Belgium, on their State Visit to South Africa from 23-27 March 2023. The Optentia Research Unit at the North-West University has collaborated with researchers in Belgium since 2002. Prof. Ian Rothmann summarised the findings of a research project on unemployment funded by the Flemish Interuniversity Board in Belgium. Prof. Hans De Witte, Prof. Anja van den Broeck, Prof. Ian Rothmann, Prof. Leoni van der Vaart, Dr Melinda du Toit and Dr Rachele Paver collaborated with various local and international experts and communities on this five-year project.

The Flemish Interuniversity Board (VLIR) requested Prof. Ian Rothmann to produce a video to inform South African stakeholders and the Belgian delegation about a research project on social entrepreneurship which VLIR funded. The project aimed to empower unemployed youth by mapping the psychological experience of being unemployed on one hand and by improving their psychological functioning through a training program on the other hand. You can watch the video [here](#).

Two strategies are necessary to deal with unemployment: a) bring unemployed people close to the labour market, and b) bring the labour market closer to people. Attending only to the attitudes, motivation, and behaviours of unemployed persons is not enough to ensure employment; jobs are also needed.



Prof. Ian Rothmann preparing for the video recording which was produced by Corne Schepers of Matchframe Media



Prof. Hans De Witte



Prof. Anja van den Broeck

“Attending only to the attitudes, motivation, and behaviours of unemployed persons is not enough to ensure employment.”

Motivation in Small and Medium Enterprises

To generate knowledge in support of the development of evidence-based interventions for small to medium enterprise (SME) effectiveness, Prof Leoni van der Vaart (together with Profs Anja Van den Broeck and Ian Rothmann) embarked on a Thuthuka-funded research project in 2020. The project, titled “Motivation @Work: A Dynamic Approach to Performance and Well-Being”, concluded in 2022, and we would like to share some interesting findings from the project.

SMEs represent most private businesses in South Africa and are, therefore, considered one of the driving forces behind economic growth. Since employees are a critical strategic resource in the success of SMEs, their efforts and well-being matter. From a self-determination theory perspective, employee motivation (in the form of basic psychological need satisfaction and motivational regulation) plays a role in optimal human functioning (e.g., work effort and well-being) (the ‘bright pathway’). However, there is also a ‘dark’ pathway in which need frustration and less optimal forms of motivation are theorised to account for less work effort and ill-being. Employees are motivated if the social context (i.e., work environment) in which they operate is need-supportive. However, the social context is dynamic and fluctuates daily and may also be need-thwarting, resulting in less optimal motivation.

Using a between-person (i.e., differences between people) approach, Naniki Mogata (together with Profs Leoni van der Vaart and Leon de Beer) surveyed 278 employees from SMEs across South Africa. She



Dr Lynelle Coxen, Prof. Anja van den Broeck, Prof. Ian Rothmann and Prof. Leoni van der Vaart

found that three ‘people’ can support these employees’ autonomy in the organisation: their manager or colleagues (by providing them with choices or including employees in decision-making) and themselves (by deliberating choosing what they wanted to do). Her results also showed that the manager played the most important role in supporting employees’ autonomy. Employees and their colleagues played a lesser role (than the manager) (Mokgata et al., 2022). In the study, autonomy support mattered because it helped them to perform. That is when they felt that their decisions and behaviours aligned with their wishes, they could perform their tasks better. They were also able to adapt to changes and proactively prepare for changes in their job, team, and/or organisation. They could do this because they were more energetic, absorbed in, and dedicated to their tasks when their autonomy was supported (Mokgata et al., 2022).

Using a within-person (i.e., differences in the same individual) approach, Lynelle Coxen (together with Profs Leoni, Anja, Ian, and Bert Schreurs), surveyed 68 SME employees for ten days. She showed that daily need

supportive leader and colleague behaviours were positively related to work effort via need satisfaction. In contrast, daily need-thwarting behaviours were negatively related to work effort via need frustration. Daily need satisfaction seemed to matter more for work effort than need frustration (Coxen et al., submitted). Using the same sample, Lynelle also showed that daily need satisfaction and frustration indirectly influenced work engagement and exhaustion via intrinsic motivation. The indirect effect of the satisfaction-intrinsic motivation-engagement pathway was more substantial than the frustration-intrinsic motivation-exhaustion pathway (Coxen et al., 2023).

Taken together, these studies support SDT propositions that the social context matters for motivation on a within- and between-person level. In turn, within- and between-person motivation accounts for variations in work efforts (or performance) and well-being.

Note: The financial assistance of the NRF towards this research is hereby acknowledged (TTK190307422577). Opinions and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily attributed to the NRF.”

“... daily need supportive leader and colleague behaviours were positively related to work effort via need satisfaction.”

Attaché of the Netherlands in South Africa Visits the NWU

On January 27, 2023, the Netherlands' Education and Science Attaché in South Africa paid a visit to North-West University's Vanderbijlpark Campus. Mr Bosscha met with senior North-West University managers to present information on the newly created position of Education and Re-

search Attaché at the Netherlands Embassy in South Africa.

"He also took the opportunity to learn more about education and research at North-West University," says Prof. Ian Rothmann, Director at Optentia Research Unit. Prof Rothmann adds, "Mr. Bosscha was invited to North-

West University by Optentia after numerous Optentia members met him during the 10th World Science Forum in Cape Town in December 2022. Interestingly, on December 9, 2022, in Cape Town, South Africa, a declaration of the '10th World Science Forum on Science for Social Justice' was adopted."



Representatives of the North-West University after the discussions with Mr Berto Bosscha

"He also took the opportunity to learn more about education and research at North-West University ..."



Smile with Diabetes: Reflecting on the Past and Looking Forward

The Smile with diabetes project started in 2015 with the aim to investigate the psychosocial variables in adjusting to diabetes management for youth. The project aims to create an understanding of living with diabetes and to give those living with the condition a voice, with the development of appropriate positive psychology interventions for this population the ultimate goal. Since 2015, one Honours project, 15 Masters studies and one PhD study was completed within the project, with 11 articles published from these studies. Currently, one Honours project, two Masters studies and three PhD studies are in process.

The main findings for the project to date can be summarised as follows:

- What you think matters: Five studies focused on the illness perception of adolescents and how this influences their adjusting to diabetes management behaviours. One of the major take home messages is that those who manage diabetes well believe that they can control the condition and even grow in the process. Those who do not share this belief see the condition as unmanageable and eventually stop trying to perform diabetes management tasks. Continuous glucose monitoring was specifically identified as an assistive technology that could empower adolescent to manage diabetes better.
- Making sense of living with diabetes is important: Three studies focused on how parents and young adults make meaning of living with diabetes. For parents, creating a

sense of normalcy and empowering their children to successfully transition to independent care added to the experience of meaning, while young adults living with diabetes reappraised a life with diabetes and developed a lifestyle, incorporating the condition to also experience positive outcomes in living with diabetes.

- More interventions are needed to assist those living with diabetes and their families to improve their well-being: Five studies investigated the interventions available for this population. Interventions focusing on parental well-being was largely absent, with most interventions focusing on education and behavioural aspects of diabetes management. Furthermore, very limited programmes were available to equip teachers to assist learners in their classes with diabetes management behaviours. The potential of positive psychology interventions in improving the well-being of those living with diabetes was emphasized in two studies. Self-compassion was found to lead to improvements in psychological and health outcomes for those living with diabetes and the



Prof. Elmari Deacon

positive psychology intervention to assist adolescents in adjusting to diabetes technology also received positive feedback from a panel of experts.

In the next phase in the project will be on fostering international collaborations to further investigate the lived experienced of those living with diabetes. Several programmes and guidelines are in the process of development in the current studies and should be published by the end of the year. Understanding diabetes stigma, and protective factors in diabetes management will be more prominent in future, as well as creating more visibility for the Smile with diabetes Project. Through these studies and interventions, we are really looking forward to making a difference in the lives of those living with diabetes.

“Continuous glucose monitoring was specifically identified as an assistive technology that could empower adolescent to manage diabetes better.”



Enhance Psychological Theories through Sound Methodology

Constructing psychological theories can be likened to building a house, where each building block, representing a fundamental principle or concept, contributes to the overall sturdiness of the structure. However, the quality of these building blocks is crucial for the overall reliability of the theory (and evidence-based practice). Therefore, the question arises, how can we enhance the quality of these building blocks through methodology?

Fortunately, Wulf et al. (2023) has addressed this issue in their recent article, offering several solutions to improve study designs, data collection, analysis, and interpretation and reporting.

Think — methods — Again



Prof. Leoni van der Vaart

For more information:

Wulff, J. N., Sajons, G. B., Pogrebna, G., Lonati, S., Bastardoz, N., Banks, G. C., & Antonakis, J. (2023). Common methodo-

logical mistakes. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 34, [Article 101677](#).

Honours Student Published Article on Self-compassion

Courtney Sandham, an honours student in Psychology on the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University, recently published her Hons report under the guidance of Prof Elmarí Deacon. The Hons report is part of the module PSYH 674 and entails writing a research proposal and conducting research. Prof Deacon and Courtney decided early in 2022 that they would like to try to publish on the topic of self-compassion in diabetes management and obtained scientific approval from Optentia, as well as HREC approval (NWU-00098-22-AI).

The study entitled 'The Role of Self-Compassion in Diabetes Management: A Rapid Review', was published in *Frontiers in Psychology: Health Psychology*. This study aimed to assemble and critically reflect on existing literature on the role of self-

compassion in diabetes management. A rapid review was conducted in which sixteen articles were identified. It was evident from the findings that self-compassion plays a rather significant role in the management of diabetes, and that interventions aimed at developing self-compassion showed success in improving health-related outcomes. It is suggested that future research should build on the possibility of using positive psychology interventions to improve the quality of life of those living with diabetes, and work to better understand the influence of aspects such as gender and diabetes duration on self-compassion. This article can be found online using the following doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1123157.



Courtney Sandham



Prof. Elmarí Deacon

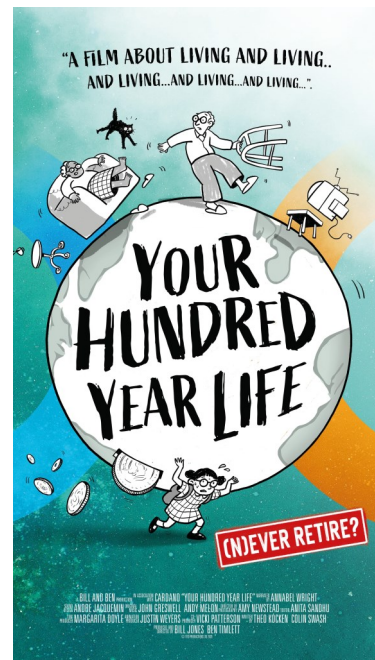
"This study aimed to assemble and critically reflect on existing literature on the role of self-compassion in diabetes management."

Southern African Premiere of Your Hundred Year Life

The Optentia Research Unit and NWU Corporate Relations and Marketing hosted the Southern African premiere of "Your Hundred Year Life: A Film about Rethinking Ageing in the 21st Century" at Killarney Cinema on April 4th, 2023.

This ground-breaking documentary, created by Dutch financial entrepreneur, filmmaker and professor of practice at the Optentia Research Unit, Theo Kocken, explores the social, health, and economic consequences of increased lifespans worldwide. As life expectancy continues to increase globally, the combination of longer life spans and lower birth rates is raising the proportion of older people relative to young ones, and the film examines the profound impact this is having on society. Leading academics attended the premiere, key role-players in social and economic development as well as the corporate sector and members of the public interested in the changing after-work landscape of South-Africa.

According to Kocken, he was travelling around the globe to countries like Ghana and Japan and noticed that people were reaching higher ages and had yet to anticipate the economic and social impact of this. In Africa, for instance, he noticed that a great number of people work in the informal sector, and have no plan for their retirement, meaning they will work for the length of their lives. He also noticed that these people tend to live happier and healthier lives, leading him to believe that the concept of retirement and the ideal retirement age should be re-evaluated.



"The primary purpose of this documentary is to raise awareness about the challenges and opportunities that longer lifespans present for individuals."

The primary purpose of this documentary is to raise awareness about the challenges and opportunities that longer lifespans present for individuals, families, and communities. It also aims to get governments involved in the economic and social mindset change needed to ensure the elderly are taken care of and that opportunities are created where they feel included and safe and not isolated and redundant.

The panel discussion led by Kocken, Prof. Jaco Hoffman, Professor of Socio-Gerontology in the Optentia Research Unit, North-West University, and Civil Legodu, Chief Director of Professional Social Services and Older Persons at the National Department of Social Development, highlighted the importance of a multi-generational workforce. Some guests raised concerns about later retirement stages and how it may negatively affect younger people's unemployment

rates; where Hoffman stated that economies grow when the elder learn from the youth, and the youth learn from the wealth of experience from their elders in a work environment that includes both parties.

The premiere of "Your Hundred Year Life: A Film about Rethinking Ageing in the 21st Century" was equally educational and entertaining, just as the premiers in Netherlands and Canada received acclaim from attendees. This documentary is a must-see for anyone interested in understanding the challenges and opportunities that longer lifespans present and the impact of this slow but inevitable change in the after-work landscape of our country. Click [here](#) to watch the trailer of the movie. Watch a video about the event [here](#).

Southern African Premiere of Your Hundred Year Life (continued)

Optentia is proud of the Honours students of the School of Industrial Psychology and Human Resource Management who assisted at the launch of the premiere of "Your Hundred Year Life" in Johannesburg. We also want to thank Mr Jean Stidworthy, Director: Marketing and Student Recruitment of Corporate Relations and Marketing at the North-West University for financial support of the event.



Back: Jodey Foster, Nonhlanhla Baloyi, Keke Molakeng, Zuziwe Kuwana; Front: Kwanele Tovela, Ntombizodwa Hlatshwayo



Prof. Theo Kocken at the screening of the film "Your Hundred Year Life"



Tony and Suzette Ragadu at the screening of the film "Your Hundred Year Life"

"We thank Mr Jean Stidworthy, Director: Marketing and Student Recruitment for financial support of the event."

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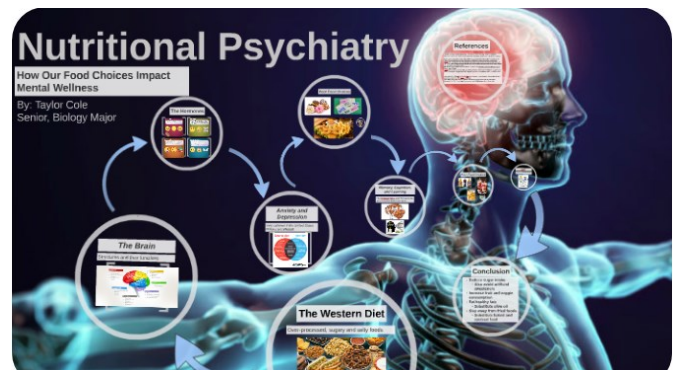


Optentia researchers Sibusiso Mnxuma, Prof. Blessed Ngwenya, Dr Thapelo Chachaa and Velly Ndlovu attended the screening of the film "Your Hundred Year Life"

Nutritional Psychiatry *by* Dr Mariette Fourie

With reference to the field on nutritional psychiatry, a paucity of research exist on the interrelatedness of gut, brain, and mental health. This necessitates more research to be conducted on the interplay between neuroplasticity, positive psychology, and nutrition, and more specifically, the gut-brain axis.

The interaction between the brain and the digestive system is established via the Vagus Nerve, where hormonal signaling enabling gut peptides from enteroendocrine cells that act directly on the brain. Intricate neurological and physiological factors enable the bidirectional communication between the gut and the brain, i.e., the gut-brain axis (GBA). The GBA consists of bidirectional communication between the central and the enteric nervous system, linking emotional and cognitive centers of the brain with peripheral intestinal functions. Recent advances in research have described the importance of gut microbiota in influencing these interactions. Furthermore, the brain is an energy-hungry organ. Despite comprising only 2 percent of the body's weight, the brain gobbles up more than 20 percent of daily energy intake. Because the brain demands such high amounts of energy, the foods we consume greatly affect brain function, including everything from learning and memory to emotions. Just like other cells in the body, brain cells use a form of sugar called glucose to fuel cellular activities. This energy comes from the foods we consume daily and is regularly delivered to brain cells (called neurons) through the blood. This process testifies of a long road for nutri-



ents consumed to get to the brain.

Many people are not aware of the GBA, and the importance of gut microbiota in influencing the interactions between a healthy brain, mind, and body. Subsequently, many are suffering from malnutrition, depression, anxiety, and mood disorders due to an unhealthy lifestyle. The importance of holistic wellbeing are encapsulated in the interconnectivity of these aspects and needs to be explicitly communicated and taught to the social community. Against this backdrop, Dr Mariette Fourie is involved in a research project will attempt to explore and gain an understanding into the gut-brain axis, the connection with mental health, and the important role nutrition plays. The project will further strive to create an awareness of the importance of gut microbiota towards brain and mental health.

We all acknowledge that food impacts our physical health, but emerging evidence suggests it can also shape our mental health, spawning a new field of science known as nutritional psychiatry. Nutritional psychiatry, as an emerging field, seeks to address mental health issues through diet. The discipline is founded upon a robust and

compelling body of evidence that suggests specific dietary patterns can improve mental health and reduce the risk of mood disorders. Multiple biological pathways have been suggested for how food can influence mood, prime among them the gut microbiome. Other potential mechanisms include oxidative stress, low-grade chronic inflammation, and blood sugar spikes.

"The interaction between the brain and the digestive system is established via the Vagus Nerve ..."

Navigating Life Thresholds with Awareness *by* Prof Vera Roos

From 12-14 March 2023, a group of curious travellers (relationship practitioners) explored different pathways to navigate thresholds—whether introduced suddenly or through prolonged anticipation. From a relational paradigm, navigating transitions requires a shift in attention away from the individual paradigm; developing a sense of interpersonal safety; be present in the here-and-now; and engage in generative listening—attentive to what is trying to emerge. A threshold always involves saying goodbye, grieving the past but also, taking on board what is good, naming it, and saying hallo to new possibilities. Thresholds tend to be accompanied by some level of bewilderment or fear and in time, by the courage to take decisions that help us choose



Front: Michele Naude, Brett Wintgens, Sonia Kruger
Middle: Leyla (the Giraffe), Frans du Toit, Vera Roos, Sue Wintgens (presenter), Hilze Strauss
Back: Anita van der Merwe, Kobus van der Merwe, Johanri Engelbrecht, Mariaan Uys

conditions where we can thrive or do our best work - a journey best captured by the word, "coddwomple": to purposefully travel towards an as-yet-unknown destination.

Inaugural Lecture: Prof. Emmanuel Mgqwashu

It was a privilege for me to give an inaugural address on the topic closest to my heart: "A timely question: how can we not talk about becoming a professor in the context of decolonising higher education?". It allowed me to reflect on the 26 years I have been an academic. The journey has been characterised by a constant feeling of discomfort, misrecognition, and often a need to protest over almost everything I considered to be aspects of academic freedom. This critical reflection on my journey to becoming a professor showed how two types of pressure facing higher-education institutions necessitate a revisiting of the role of a professor. I argued that these pressures are, firstly, to account for "market-friendliness" and, secondly, to respond to the transformation and

decolonisation imperatives as a result of massification. I attempted to show how the broader socio-economic and political conditions under which universities exist and the impact they have on the knowledge project require a conscious re-adaptation of a professorial role. This is the necessary if the goal is to have a productive professoriate. I enjoyed giving a talk that was neither prescriptive of how a professorial role needs to respond to these imperatives, nor questioning the role the professoriate currently plays in higher education. Instead, I suggested possible conceptual framings that we can draw upon as we attempt to re-envision this role.

The fact that two days later was my 50th birthday meant all the special people in my life were present, and celebrated 50 years



Prof. Emmanuel Mgqwashu

of my life in earth the following Sunday. What a blessing to be alive.

Topic: A timely question: how can we not talk about becoming a professor in the context of decolonising higher education?

"From a relational paradigm, navigating transitions requires a shift in attention away from the individual paradigm ..."

Intertwining Medical Sociology with Intimacy Coaching

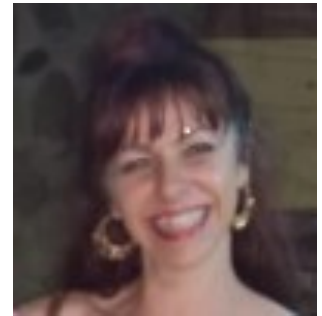
"... many people can simply no longer do their jobs without significant support from their machine partners."

Intimacy coaching is a specialized form of coaching that focuses on helping people enhance the quality of their intimate relationships, based on the premise that relationships are the cornerstone of a healthy and balanced life. According to Maslow, sex (as part of intimacy) is a basic human need. It's considered to be in the first tier of the hierarchy of needs, which is referred to as physiological needs. This tier also includes other basic survival needs, such as food, shelter, air, water, sleep, warmth, and excretion. The practice of Intimacy Coaching is designed to help people create deeper and more meaningful connections with their partners, increase emotional intimacy and build trust. The role of the medical sociologist is to help couples and individuals to develop better communication, intimacy, and connection skills in their relationships, which creates the platform to enhance the quality of intimate relationships. These skills are transferable to social relations, business relations as well as family relations.

The goal of intimacy coaching is to help people understand the emotional and physical needs of their partner, and to develop emotional intelligence and communication skills to create more fulfilling relationships, through guided conversations, exercises, and activities. The Medical sociologists facilitates the process by assisting couples and individuals to understand how their social, cultural, and environmental contexts influence the way they interact with each other. This can relate to stereotyping cultures or sub-cultures of society and how this stereotyping can influence

the manner in which people interact with each other. They can also provide insight into the emotional needs of each individual, as well as how to better communicate those needs. In some instances, energy work such as Reiki or Specialised massage techniques are infused to "rewire" the energy fields of the client, allowing for a greater feeling of well-being and relaxation. Research clearly shows that discussing your sexual wants and needs with each other will lead to a better sex life and form a closer bond between you and your partner. Communicating about your sexual desires may also help build trust between you and your partner, and trust is the foundation of any relationship. It is vital to acknowledge at this point that communication is not limited to the sexual realm, but can and does benefit all other types of relationships.

Intimacy coaching is beneficial for couples, individuals, and families by helping work through the issues that are causing tension, building trust, and providing strategies for creating a stronger and more loving relationship, whilst the Medical sociologists facilitates the process to identifying and resolving any issues that are preventing the development of healthy and fulfilling relationships. For individuals, this can translate into increased self-awareness and identification of personal goals. For families, intimacy coaching can help create stronger family bonds, improve communication, and build stronger relationships among family members. Furthermore, whilst Intimacy coaching explores the power dynamics between



Dr Marina Basson

couples and individuals, Medical sociologists provide insight into how power dynamics in relationships can impact the dynamics of intimacy, and can provide guidance on how to create a more equitable and healthy relationship.

In conclusion, the combination of a Medical Sociologist who specialises in Intimacy Coaching enhances the ability of the coach to provide guidance and support, education and resources, which all help people deepen their relationships. This includes teaching couples how to recognize and appreciate each other through building healthy and fulfilling relationships by creating an environment that encourages mutual respect and understanding.

Welcoming the SIPHRM Master's Class with Lego® Serious Play

Earlier this year, Kevin Jooste, an alumnus of the North-West University (NWU) and current Organisational Psychologist and founder of psyQ Consulting, was invited by the NWU School of Industrial Psychology and Human Resource Management to commence the 2023 Masters academic year. By making use of Lego® Serious Play® (LSP) as core methodology, the Industrial Psychology, Human Resource Management and Labour Relations Management students were encouraged to engage in a process of a sense-making, vision and role clarification for the coming year.

Working in groups, students were required to build a number of interdependent models based on the groups' vision, values and behaviours. These models were then further unpacked through the use of Socratic dialogue and Appreciative Inquiry.

This process culminated in a shared model building process in which the students collectively set guiding principles for themselves that would allow for a collaborative, enthusiastic and productive journey ahead.



Kevin Jooste

NWU SIPHRM M-GRUP VISION 2023

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BE RESILIENT, APPRECIATE WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT GOALS/JOURNEYS



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“Working in groups, students were required to build a number of interdependent models based on the groups' vision, values and behaviours.”



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Books

Boyatzis, R., Smith, M., & Van Oosten, E. (2019). Helping people change: Coaching with compassion for life-long learning and growth.

Clark, A., & Sousa, B. (2018). How to be a happy academic. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Giccione, K., & Hutchinson, S. (2021). Coaching and mentoring for academic development. Bingley: Emerald Publishing.

Hopkins, S., Brooks, S.A., & Yeung, A. (2020). Mentoring to empower researchers: Success in research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Jansen, J., & Visser, D. (2022). On becoming a scholar: What every academic needs to know. Cape Town: African Minds.

Upcoming Events (Click [here](#) to go to the Optentia Research Calendar)

Useful Websites

- <https://goodorganisations.com>
- <https://youtube.com/c/GoodOrganisations> is an informative YouTube channel
- www.refseek.com is a search engine for academic resources.
- www.worldcat.org - search the content of 20,000 global libraries.
- <https://link.springer.com> - access to more than 10 million scientific documents: books, articles,
- <http://repec.org> - Volunteers from 102 countries collected nearly 4 million publications
- www.science.gov is a U.S. government search engine.
- www.pdfdrive.com is the largest website for free download of PDF books.
- www.base-search.net is one of the most powerful search engines for academic research texts.