

The APPPAH Newsletter

News From the First Frontier: Conception To Birth

Official Bulletin of the Association for Prenatal & Perinatal Psychology & Health, Summer 2013



BIRTH PSYCHOLOGY in ACTION: TRANSFORMATION through the CREATIVE & HEALING ARTS

November 14 - 17, 2013
Asilomar Conference Grounds
Pacific Grove ~ California

Congress News: Focus on Somatics

[Register Online Now](#)

Please join APPPAH at the 18th International Congress this November, 14-17th with our focus on *Transformation through the Creative and Healing Arts*. [Complete Program Online](#)

Featured Presenters focusing on Somatic & Healing Arts in Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health include:



Sensory Integration: Tools and Tips for Integrating Birth to Health



Occupational therapist, [Peg Bledsoe](#), explores how birth is a foundational experience that is replayed throughout life. A traumatic impact from the prenatal period, or birth, can affect an individual from infancy through old age. When one understands these traumas, and can identify them, it can be a powerful aid to improving outcomes in all types of patients. A number of illnesses and developmental disabilities can be traced to many forms of birth trauma.

The Art of Somatic Experiencing: Integrating Somatics and Art Therapy in Healing Pre- and Perinatal Trauma

The after effects of prenatal and perinatal trauma reside in pre-verbal sensation cues in the autonomic nervous system. These after effects include dissociation, rigidity, constriction, and helplessness. [Meagan Pugh, PhD](#), uses a technique known as pendulation to reach the pre-verbal trauma and bring it to cognition and a sense of well being.



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The Synergistic Power of Integrated Healing Arts in Pregnancy and Childbirth



In this engaging and interactive presentation, [Brooke Radloff](#) presents her groundbreaking Integral Model of Pregnancy and Childbirth. Brook will demonstrate how pregnant women can work consciously and proactively with the internal and external influences that most deeply impact the quality of her pregnancy and birth experience.

Resolving Prenatal and Birth Trauma: Getting to the Heart of Our Work with Infants and Families

Cranial-sacral therapist, [Peggy Reynolds](#), will show how the infant will inevitably take the lead in getting its needs met and how we can support the parents to respond to the infant's promptings. Via a video diary Peggy will share one infant's early trauma, developmental issues and the resolution of the traumas and re-connection of the family unit.



Mindfulness and Perinatal Health: Waking Up to the Somatic Experiences of Pregnancy and Childbirth



How can mindfulness help us experience the fullness of pregnancy and birth? [Jane Riccobono](#) will present a review of mindfulness as a tool for coping and healing all aspects of childbirth and suggest new directions for research in the field. Jane will include an overview of key studies that support mindfulness as an intervention for coping with pain and fear.

Not a Member?

[Join Now!](#)

Join now and save on conference registration fee plus receive member benefits.
Membership rates as low as \$75 per year.



APPPAH illuminates the life-long impact of conception, pregnancy and birth on babies, families and society.

[**www.birthpsychology.com**](http://www.birthpsychology.com)
[**apppah@birthpsychology.com**](mailto:apppah@birthpsychology.com)

Letter from the President

Dear APPPAH Members, Students, and Prospective Members,

In this letter, I am asking you to make two significant contributions to birth psychology.

First, I invite you to join APPPAH, or rejoin for a 3-year term, because we need funding to accomplish our current goals. Up to 90% of babies are traumatized by technological birth. And many mothers are traumatized by giving birth (around 30%, and up to 17% have PTSD, the most severe degree of trauma).

We need to educate the over four million women in North America who give birth each year in order to prevent trauma to themselves and their babies. We intend to put a flyer in every OB office and in the hands of every pregnant woman, and this costs money. So please donate, or become a member today, and enjoy the many benefits: discounts to birth psychology conferences, preferential speaker status, partner program discounts, free access to 26 years of print and online journal articles, access to APPPAH's certification training program, discount advertising in the APPPAH Newsletter, and other substantial advantages. Simply write a check for \$10, \$20, \$100, or whatever amount you can afford.

The second contribution is to attend the upcoming APPPAH Congress, November 14-17 at Asilomar Conference Grounds near Monterey, California.



BIRTH PSYCHOLOGY in ACTION: TRANSFORMATION through the CREATIVE & HEALING ARTS

Alfonso is a good example of the power of the healing arts. I was treating an adolescent schizophrenic who rarely spoke, but when he did, he could be brilliant - or mumbling and unintelligible. I tried to reach his inner world by inviting him to draw and paint. He began with catatonic movements, unable or unwilling to draw. The movements accelerated to pounding and rage for three months, until one day he drew a circle, and then hundreds more as days passed. Soon his drawings shifted from circles to cylinders. His rage returned, accompanied by loud sounds, like "whoom-whoom". When making these sounds he also made large, standing movements, and was lost in emotions that at times looked like ecstasy and at times like terror. On occasion, he flicked his wrists as he said "whoom-whoom" and then ran in circles. One day he handed me a 1969 motorcycle film, "Easy Rider", starring Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper. Then I understood that his whoom-whoom sounds were that of a motorcycle and his wrist-flicks the motion that riders do to accelerate. Days later his first sentence to me was, "I want a whoom-whoom." He purchased one at a junkyard, and then he found a manual showing how to take the motorcycle apart and put it back together, which he did a dozen times. In the process he taught himself how to read the manual, and his parents happily provided funding to buy needed parts, and soon he was an avid reader, repairman, and rider. Within a year he worked in a motorcycle shop repairing engines, earning money, and speaking with customers. This amazing transformation happened because of the power of nonverbal therapy using art, creativity, and movement. Many traumatized children need and profit from such an approach. So Alfonso and I invite you to attend the November Congress!!!

In service of birth psychology,
William R Emerson, Ph.D.
President of APPPAH

2013 Congress: Welcome from Congress Chairs



APPPAH'S 18TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

BIRTH PSYCHOLOGY in ACTION: TRANSFORMATION through the CREATIVE & HEALING ARTS

November 14-17, 2013 - Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, CA

The 2013 annual international Birth Psychology Congress is pleased to return to the natural beauty of Asilomar State Park in Pacific Grove, California, on the Monterey Peninsula.

Within the supportive surround of salt air, ocean breezes, majestic pines, ambient sounds of the waves, and the historic rustic beauty of Asilomar's architecture, this Congress has a mission to highlight the sensory experiences of pre and perinatal psychology and health focusing on how the healing and creative arts play a primary role in this field. We will bring to the fore the necessity of using somatic and creative healing arts in both preventative and restorative aspects of conception, gestation, birth, and the perinatal period for babies and their families. This Congress will be a true marriage of the arts within the sciences. We encourage presenters and attendees in the fields of creative and expressive arts to attend along with psychologists, social workers, NICU staff, ob/gyn professionals, childbirth educators, doulas, pediatricians, early childhood educators, health advocates, and professionals in somatic healing practices.

Please join us!

[Ellyne and Peg](#)

Congress Chairs

[Register Now!](#)

<http://birthpsychology.com/2013-conference>

2013 Congress Keynote Speakers

Annie Brook, somatic psychotherapist and movement artist, is a highly skilled clinician, author, and public speaker. Her presentation "How Birth Influences Behavior: Working with the Earliest Brain States and Cellular Repair" - a session not to be missed!



Pam England, teacher and midwife for over 20 years, will explore the social seeds of birth trauma and discuss ways to minimize emotional birth trauma in her presentation "Birth Story Medicine" ~ a way to change the U.S. birth culture.



Gary Malkin, an award-winning composer dedicated to making a difference in the world by creating music that inspires the heart and catalyzes healing.



Wendy Anne McCarty has worked with families for over 40 years using energy psychology to help heal and support babies and families. She will share stories in her presentation "Aligning Our Multidimensional Wholeness and Awakening our Human Experience within Its Embrace: Babies, Families and All of Us!"



This is going to be a fabulous congress!
Be sure to register right away!

APPPAH is on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/50590323188>

Check out our site for the latest news, research, and events promoting healthy births and healthy babies.

APPPAH HAILS THE 2013 BIRTH ARTIST HONOREES

Three extraordinary people have collaborated extensively to create music scientifically composed to help families with bonding prenatally, during postpartum at home or in the hospital, and in the neonatal intensive care unit. Their creations have been used in hospital studies to demonstrate the significant and lasting physical and emotional effects

In addition to be our honorees, Gary Malkin is giving a [keynote presentation](#), and Gary and Lisa will be offering a [post congress training](#) along with Bruce Cryer CEO of HEARTMATH.



Gary Malkin is an award-winning composer and public speaker dedicated to making a difference in the world by creating music that inspires the heart and catalyzes healing. He is passionate about way music can reduce stress, and strengthen our emotional intelligence throughout the transitions of our lives, from birth to death. He also co-authored (with David Surrenda, Ph.D. and Lisa Rafel) a CD/book called Safe in the Arms of Love to enhance bonding between parents and newborns.

Lisa Rafel is a "sound healing" educator, songwriter and singer on numerous recordings that support heartfelt connection between parents and their babies. An internationally recognized transformative teacher, performer, Lisa presents internationally on the use of sound as a tool for health and healing. Her innovative workshops focus on self-healing techniques using modern scientific principles and practices from ancient and indigenous cultures. Lisa has two children and six grandchildren.



As both a licensed clinical psychologist David Surrenda has helped pregnant couples and families address the issues that arise during major life transitions. David has conducted executive level organizational consultation and coaching with high tech businesses, health care, local and federal government and educational systems for 40 years. David was founder, Dean and curriculum director for the Graduate School of Holistic Studies at John F. Kennedy University.

A Healing Time for Mothers**[Register Online Now!](#)**

When: November 17 - 1:30 - 5:30pm

Where: Asilomar Conference Grounds, Pacific Grove, California

Cost: \$75 for members; \$100 for non-members

Who: Wendy Anne McCarty



Pregnancy, birth, and the early bonding period set in motion the foundation of life-patterns for baby, mother, the mother-child relationship and fathers too.

Too often these experiences are not ideal. Many mothers carry unresolved and unspoken grief, disappointment, pain, trauma, or regrets from their pregnancies, births, and early mothering experiences. They see how difficult early experiences created a cascade of diminished opportunities, how events affected their child's potential, or disrupted their relationship with their child or partner.

Whether in the midst of those difficult experiences now or decades have passed, this workshop is to provide mothers a healing process to help find greater peace, relief, and to allow the story of that earlier time to have new meaning.

Dr. McCarty will share her approach and experience of family healing incorporating prenatal and perinatal psychology understandings and energy psychology healing processes. Mothers have the opportunity to quiet into a guided reflective process to consider earlier experiences and discover what emerges for healing. Together, we do a group energy psychology TAT® healing process. A second reflective time and a TAT® surrogate healing process for your child or family follows along with time for integrative sharing.

PARENTING FOR PEACE news with Marcy Axness

More and more P4P-ers are accepting my invitation to join the P4P Coaching & Care Circle -- a *complimentary* resource to my community, which is YOU!

A 1-hr. live call with me each month, devoted SOLELY to answering your questions and addressing your individual parenting circumstances & needs.

3rd Thursday of the month | 11am Pacific

More info: <http://marcyaxness.com/coachingandcare/>

APPPAH Publications: *The Journal & the Newsletter*

JOPPPAH (*Journal of Prenatal & Perinatal Psychology and Health*) is our peer-reviewed publication whose original mandate to publish current findings from the growing field of prenatal & perinatal psychology later became refined and expanded to cover:

- Psychological factors that affect conception, pregnancy, labor, delivery and the post-partum period;
- The reciprocal mechanisms of interaction between the pregnant mother and her unborn and sentient child and the mother and her newborn;
- The influence of the family, society, and the environment on the pregnant mother and her unborn child;
- Evidence-based measures that will improve the emotional well being of mothers, fathers, and newborns;
- The psychological effects of medical technology during conception, pregnancy, labor, and delivery on all parties concerned;
- Methods of prevention and intervention/resolution of prenatal and perinatal traumas with children and adults;
- Interfaces between prenatal and perinatal psychology and medicine, genetics, developmental psychology, anthropology, ethics and the law.

JOPPPAH is looking for high-quality research or clinical papers focused on the psychological dimensions of human reproduction and pregnancy, as well as the mental and emotional development of the unborn and newborn child.
 Please contact the editors at journal.editor@birthpsychology.com for complete author guidelines and/or to submit your manuscript of 2,000 to 8,000 words.

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APPPAH's quarterly **Newsletter** is a bulletin featuring notable accomplishments of our worldwide membership, information on upcoming events, our collaborations with other organizations, brief book reviews, and notes/commentary on prenatal issues in the press and popular culture.

APPPAH Members: Please send news items, reviews, events, commentary, and other items to the Newsletter Editor, Peter G. Prontzos at: pprontzos@langara.bc.ca

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MEDIA WATCH

This section feature items in the news that are pertinent to prenatal and perinatal psychology. APPPAH does not necessarily agree with, or vouch for, the scientific worthiness of any of the news items mentioned here.

Diet During Pregnancy and Early Life May Affect Children's Behavior and Intelligence. Evidence is accumulating to show that nutrition pre-birth and in early life "programmes" long term health, well being, brain development and mental performance. [Sept. 13, 2013; ScienceDaily: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/09/130913101815.htm#.UjR7rCOu29A.email>]

The Prison System Welcomes My Newborn Niece to This World. My niece...is a superhero...Her path into this world was a rough, rough haul. [September 12, 2013; Maya Schenwar, Truthout: <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/18776-the-prison-system-welcomes-my-newborn-niece-to-this-world#.UjIr3XefSu8.email>]

Expectant Mothers' Periodontal Health Vital to Health of Her Baby. Women with periodontal disease may be at risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, giving birth to a pre-term or low-birth weight baby. [Aug. 28, 2013; ScienceDaily: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/08/130828092310.htm#.Uh989Y28C2Y.email>]

Babies Learn to Recognize Words in the Womb. As a fetus grows inside a mother's belly, it can hear sounds from the outside world—and can understand them well enough to retain memories of them after birth. [August 26, 2013; Beth Skwarecki, Science: <http://news.sciencemag.org/brain-behavior/2013/08/babies-learn-recognize-words-womb>]

New study suggests "universal fetal exposure" to BPA . A new study in California found bisphenol A in all samples of umbilical cord blood obtained from pregnant women, suggesting universal fetal exposure. [Aug 23, 2013; Environmental Health News: http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/newscience/2013/08/2013-0822_bpa-in_umbilical_cord_blood]

Quitting smoking in pregnancy tied to benefit for baby. Women who quit smoking immediately before or after becoming pregnant gain more weight during and after pregnancy - but their babies are less likely to be born small than those born to smokers. [August 20, 2013; Veronica Hackethal, Reuters Health: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/20/us-health-smoking-quit-baby-benefit-idUSBRE97J0NO20130820>]

Autism may begin in the womb. Two new studies add to a growing body of evidence pointing to pregnancy as a critical period in the brain changes that lead to autism. [August 13, 2013; Liz Szabo, USA Today: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/08/12/autism-labor-induction/2641391>]

Emotional Behavior of Adults Could Be Triggered in the Womb. Adults could be at greater risk of becoming anxious and vulnerable to poor mental health if they were deprived of certain hormones while developing in the womb. Aug. 6, 2013; ScienceDaily: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/08/130806132750.htm#.UgPOL3xm37Q.email>]

Diets of Pregnant Women Contain Harmful, Hidden Toxins. Pregnant women regularly consume food and beverages containing toxins believed to pose potential risks to developing fetuses. Aug. 7, 2013; ScienceDaily: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/08/130807094241.htm#.UgPK9D8UblQ.email>

Meet the man trying to change the way women give birth around the world

by Beverley Turner, The Telegraph (June 17, 2013)

Dr Michel Odent wants men out of delivery rooms, pregnant women off drugs no one fully understands and for doctors to stop scaring expecting women the world over. He's now written a book hoping to change global birthing practices.

Former surgeon, childbirth specialist and 83-year-old Frenchman Dr Michel Odent turned to Google whilst researching his new book. "I found," he says in an accent as thick as a ripe Brie, "270 books on the future of Homo Sapiens in relation to technology, travel, food etc etc...but there was not one book on the effect of birth on the future of our species."

"Yet this event has changed radically in past decades. To me, that is an incredible void."

He has attempted to remedy "this cultural blindness" with his thirteenth book: *Childbirth and the Future of Homo Sapiens*, a rigidly scientific – rather than ideological - analysis that cross-references changes in global birth practice with research into rates of depression, allergies, autism and especially the central role that the hormone Oxytocin plays in relation to each of these issues.

Be warned: it is not an easy read and in conversation Michel is keen to stress: "This is NOT a book for pregnant women." But in and among the complex scientific jargon and references, are some light-bulb moments; some absolute gems that you will keep turning over in your mind for days. His book is a tinderbox that will infuriate both the pro-C-section lobbyists (babies born this way are five times more likely to suffer allergies he points out) and the natural birthers (infant death globally between birth and 28 days appears twice as high after planned homebirth than hospital birth).

But this willingness to chuck a match on the emotional petrol of childbirth makes Odent as fascinating as his main conclusion: millennia of evolution has caused women to lose the ability to birth as nature intended (ideally, in his mind, alone except for one "knitting midwife") and therefore our global priority should be "to rediscover the primary needs of laboring women." But before we dismiss him as a kaftan-wearing loon who likes women to suffer, we should listen.

Who is this guy?

Dr Michel Odent is famously good at being one step ahead of the game. He is a proper geeky scientist who loves a good statistic; he is the founder of The Primal Health Research Centre in London and in the 1970s was the first obstetrician to write about water-births in medical literature. He introduced the concept of 'home-like' birth centres in hospitals and birthing pools – which are now standard in maternity units throughout the world. He has built his reputation on an anthropological fascination (and adoration) of women and the way they have delivered babies since the beginning of time. YouTube may now be the home for clips of newborns crawling to find a breast, but it was Odent who first documented this ability in medical literature.

[The full story is available on the Telegraph website: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/mother-tongue/10120649/Meet-the-man-trying-to-change-the-way-women-give-birth-around-the-world.html>]

Brain Development and Learning Conference

At the end of July, the University of British Columbia hosted a fascinating Brain Development and Learning Conference in Vancouver, Canada. It was the fourth interdisciplinary conference devoted to improving children's lives, including the need for positive social relationships, empathy, the effects of stress on the brain, prenatal care, attachment, and family dynamics. In all of these fields, there is the growing awareness of how much our mental, emotional, and physical health is affected our early experiences and environments, as well as the social determinants of well-being.

Some of the more well-known presenters include Mary Gordon, Bruce Perry, Tracy Bale, Sonia Lupien, and Moshe Szyf. Two of the talks that are most relevant to APPPAH were those of Gabor Maté, and the final keynote speaker, Daniel Siegel.

Before our minds can affect the world, the world creates our minds, according to Vancouver physician and author, Gabor Maté. Our view of the world, including our sense of self, depends very much upon our experiences, which begin in the womb. "Attachment is the most important dynamic in human life," he said, and "babies' brains are wired to attach."

Our experiences, especially in our earliest years, can shape the very structure of our brains and how we feel, think and act — for better or worse. If these experiences are painful and happen at an early age, we usually remain unaware of them. Nevertheless, Mate contends that medical practitioners usually don't recognize or treat this crucial aspect of our emotional lives.

Mate, who spent 12 years treating people in the skid row of the Downtown Eastside, said people become addicted to drugs in order to cope with the pain of their lives — and that every sex-trade worker he helped was a victim of abuse as a child.

He pointed out that we must move beyond the individual model of illness to embrace what he terms a "biopsychosocial" explanation, in which the mind, body and society are seen as an interacting continuum. Cancer, for instance, is usually caused by a number of factors, which may include toxins in our environment, chronic stress, and social isolation. Genes, he added, "can pre-dispose, but not pre-determine" who will get sick.

Maté mentioned a study of breast cancer in women, which found that those who were both over-stressed and lacked strong social connections had a cancer rate nine times higher than women who were stressed but had strong social bonds, as well as those who had weak connections but were not stressed. Chronic stress — from overwork, poverty, abuse and so on — suppresses the normal function of a person's immune system, increasing the risk of a host of illnesses.

For reasons such as these, Maté says that "cancer is not an individual disease," and that reducing the scourge of many illnesses — both emotional and physical — requires significant social changes, including making society more supportive of children and their families.

For his part, Dr. Daniel Siegel pointed out that one's "self" is composed of three fundamental elements: your brain, your body, and your relations with other people. Siegel was not being poetic or metaphorical. As he explained, your mind ("your consciousness, which includes your 'heart')...is shaped by both the connections we have with others and by the connections we have within the synaptic structures of our embodied nervous system."

As he put it: "The mind is within you and between you."

Not surprisingly, the most important influences are those experiences that we have in our earliest years – including in the womb. His talk, entitled, “Interpersonal Neurobiology of the Developing Mind”, explored how a “healthy” mind functions and can be nurtured. His definition of a healthy mind is one in which “energy and information flow” freely in its three aspects: in your brain, through your body, and also between people. When childhood or other trauma interferes with this flow, “chaos and/or rigidity result”, both of which “are reflections of impaired relational or neural integration.”

Throughout his talk, Siegel, who teaches at UCLA, emphasized how our increasing understanding of interpersonal neurobiology can greatly improve our treatment of children – in the home, in school, and in society in general. Children need to be seen, to feel safe, and to be soothed when they are distressed, in order for healthy attachment to develop.

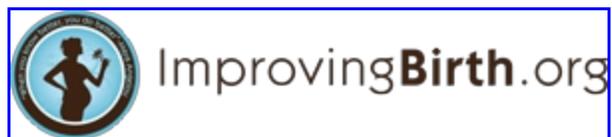
Siegel, whose most recent book is, “The Developing Mind” (reviewed in the last *Newsletter*), stressed the monumental importance of how experience can affect the functioning of our genes, turning them on and off. These “epigenetic” changes can be passed on to our children and grandchildren – and perhaps even further. One question that came up in several of the talks was: can therapeutic intervention heal the epigenetic damage caused by trauma? Like some other researchers (Arthur Janov, Moshe Szyf, and Thomas Boyce, for instance), Siegel believes that this approach is very promising.

Siegel then explained how our ideas and feelings can be shaped by past memories of which we are not only unaware, but which nevertheless feel like they are in the present.

Siegel also discussed how complex systems, like the mind, are both embodied and relational. They can self-organize and self-regulate. He defined a healthy mind as one in which “optimal self-organization depends on the linkage of differentiated parts to create integration and harmony.” Both within the individual and in groups: “Integration creates kindness and compassion.”

Siegel went on to explain that we need “to apply science to make the world a better place.” For instance, we know that when people feel threatened, they readily divide others into “in-group and out-group”. This is a natural legacy of our evolutionary history. Siegel stressed how “we have to rise above the tendencies of the human mind” that are dangerous and which have led to so much unnecessary suffering. Echoing the insight of Socrates, that, “the unexamined life is not worth living”, Siegel said that becoming more mindfully aware is necessary for both mental and social health.

We need to go beyond the excessive individualism of our culture to emphasize our shared lives. The cultivation of our natural empathy is another critical step toward a more humane world. Siegel’s two hour talk – without notes or powerpoint - was relaxed, humorous, and extremely informative.



“Now is the time to work together...

This movement isn’t about natural birth vs. medicated birth. It’s not about hospital birth vs. home birth or birth center birth. It’s about women being capable of making safer, more informed decisions about their care and that of their babies, when they are given full and accurate information about their care options, including the potential harms, benefits, and alternatives.

Then, within that choice, they are treated with dignity and compassion.”