



Call for Papers

Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (MIRCI)

International Conference on Motherhood Activism, Advocacy, Agency

May 12-14, 2011 Toronto, Ontario

Grounded in a long history, in which women activists, writers, and feminists focused much effort on strengthening the social, personal, and political power of mothers, current motherhood research and activism makes maternal empowerment one of the major goals of its work. Contemporary examinations and deployments of women's power as mothers—and mothers' power as women—seek to grant women greater authority, resources, and status so that they can adequately care for their children while living full and purposeful lives. The aim of this conference is to explore activism, advocacy, and agency by and on behalf of mothers from a variety of perspectives and in a multitude of contexts. These include (but are not limited to): the motherhood movement, community activism and engagement, politics, law, public policy, education, mental and physical health, maternal practice, family, workplace, personal identity, cultural expression, arts, the media and popular culture. We are particularly interested in presenters whose work examines ways in which issues of race, class, nationality, sexuality, age, religion, or ethnicity affect (positively or negatively) the ability of mothers to advocate for and/or achieve authority, agency, respect, and empowerment.

Topics include but not limited to:

the relationship between maternal agency and institutional constraints; personal agency; social agency; intersectionality and maternal agency; maternal agency and social justice; empowerment and family-life responsibilities; maternal agency and legal norms/practices; public policy and the public/private split; neoliberalism and public policy for mothers; healthism and maternal agency; navigating cultural expressions of “good” and “bad” mothering; second and third shift responsibility and agency; online advocacy and empowered mothering; maternal advocacy as theorized or practiced by women of a particular race, class, religion, or culture; empowered caregiving versus non-empowered caregiving; workplace norms and maternal advocacy or agency; motherhood and politics; “having it all” and maternal empowerment; challenging the maternal wall; challenging the “price of motherhood”; pregnancy and maternal agency; empowered mothering and disability; co-parenting and maternal empowerment; social change potential of memoir, narrative, autobiography, or blogging; maternal empowerment through artistic expression, film, music, literature, pop culture, or other arts; maternal agency through ‘experts’ or resistance to them; maternal empowerment by being resistant to or rooted in traditions, histories, or generational knowledges; navigating multiple identities as a mother; motherhood movements; advocacy for new family forms and relations; feminist mothering; queer and/or transgendered mothering; gender equity in home and work place; redefining fathering; othermothering; activism by young and/or low-income mothers; maternal activists’ allies.

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:

Cindy Sheehan, Peace and Social Justice Advocate

Gayle Brandeis, National Staff, CODEPINK: Women for Peace

Tara Brettholtz, President, Mothers and More

Deborah Byrd, Lafayette College, co-editor of *Teaching Against the Isms*

Cheli English-Figaro, President Emerita of Mocha Moms, Inc.

Rachel Epstein, Coordinator, Sherbourne Health Centre's LGBTQ Parenting Network

Robbie Davis-Floyd, University of Texas, Austin, author of *Birth as an American Rite of Passage*

Ariel Gore, founding editor of *Hip Mama*, author of *Whatever, Mom: Hip Mama's Guide to Raising a Teenager*

Fiona J. Green, University of Winnipeg, author of *Feminist Mothering in Theory and Practice, 1985-1995*

Diana Gustafson, Memorial University, author of *Unbecoming Mothers*

Pat Gowens, founder of Welfare Warriors, editor of *Mother Warriors Voice*.

Erika Horwitz, author of *Mothers' Resistance to the Western Dominant Discourse on Mothering*

Amber Kinser, East Tennessee State University, author of *Motherhood and Feminism*

Jeanette Corbiere Lavell, President, Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)

D. Meme Lavell-Harvard, President, Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA)

D. Lynn O'Brien Hallstein, Boston University, author of *White Feminists and Contemporary Maternity*

Andrea O'Reilly, York University, Founder/Director, Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement

Please send 250 word abstract and 50 word bio to aoreilly@yorku.ca by March 15, 2011

One must a 2011 member of MIRCI to present at this conference.

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