



Building Children's Nursing for Africa conference 2019: 'Constructs of Care'

A participative conference for nurses who work with children, newborns to adolescents, and their families, to consider and celebrate their contribution to excellence in care

An interview with Marianne van der Heijden, by Andrea Amos (1st year MNCN student)



When asked what her profession is, Marianne's immediate response was: "I am a professional question mark". She feels that her professional background is quite unusual, considering she is a qualified Medical Anthropologist (social scientist), who did her PhD in paediatric surgery, which now makes her a medical researcher. Simply put, she asks questions for a living and uses different methods to answer them (qualitative or quantitative research). Therefore, she summarises her job as a "professional question mark".

Marianne was born in Holland (Netherlands). She obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Amsterdam and obtained her PhD at the Erasmus Medical Centre in Rotterdam. Prior to completing her PhD, she had her own business as a consultant in integrated medicine. She's had a keen interest since high school, in pain, suffering, anxiety and finding non-pharmacological methods to relieve these stressors. She feels non-pharmacological therapies should be explored and considered, especially with regards to traditional healers. Her interest has led her to focus on integrated medicine and has guided one of her research studies. Marianne attended the Building Children's Nursing for Africa 2019 conference to present her research study titled: 'Can live music therapy reduce distress and pain in children with burns after wound care procedures? A randomized controlled trial.'

Marianne always had an interest in different countries and cultures, and because she has lived in several countries, she considers herself a citizen of the world. During her stay in Cape Town, while conducting her research study, she learnt to speak Afrikaans in the Cape Flats dialect and isiXhosa, she now speaks four languages: Dutch, English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa.