



invites everyone to a **talk** by

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on

**Discursive constructions of
women's identities as
mothers in blogs on
miscarriage**

Abstract:

This paper investigates the methods employed by women to discursively articulate their identities as mothers as projected in the context of four miscarriage blogs. A miscarriage is a pregnancy loss occurring during the first twenty four weeks. This traumatic experience, which is an extremely frequent phenomenon, is often shrouded in a veil of silence. The Internet constitutes a safe space where such life-changing experiences can be shared and where bereaved women freely articulate their identities. By applying the insights and methods of Computer Mediated Discourse Analysis (Herring 2004) and aspects of Higgins's (1987) self-discrepancy theory, the analysis will uncover two salient patterns of identity construction of the bereaved mothers: firstly, women project themselves as 'heavenly mothers', whose children are still living, but in a different world. This indicates that those women rely on various aspects of the dominant discourse of motherhood. Secondly, women medicalise their experiences of pregnancy loss. This leads to their self-representation as victims of their bodily failures which inhibit them from attaining their aspired-for identities as mothers.

Wednesday, 10 April, 6.00 p.m. Room 101A