

Philosophical Engagements with Trauma
March 22-23, 2019
Laurel Forum, Karpen Hall
University of North Carolina Asheville

In this first-ever conference of its kind, academics and professionals from across the United States as well as Canada, England and Russia will come together to consider what philosophy can tell us about trauma, and how trauma needs to inform philosophy. As empirical evidence increasingly shows that trauma is part of the experience and reality of people all over the world, philosophy's traditional task of investigating that experience and reality must also engage with trauma.

Topics to be addressed at the conference span a range of philosophical areas, generally directed toward the question of what it means for us, as individuals and as societies, to live in circumstances that are traumatic. Papers will address broad questions of how trauma affects people's abilities to know and understand themselves and others, people's abilities to make moral decisions when they have been damaged by trauma, and even people's abilities to construct and maintain a sense of self under trauma. Other presenters will turn attention to more specific issues, such as how medical professionals experience trauma in their work, how queer persons are subjected to trauma, and how Eurocentric epistemologies perpetuate traumatic effects on African peoples. The impulse in these and other presentations generally is to bring philosophy's unique and ultimately practical abilities to help us understand what is best to do and how people of all kinds can live well to questions of traumatic experience.

Of particular interest will be the two keynote speakers, Dr. Peg O'Connor of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, and Dr. Abby Wilkerson of George Washington University in Washington, D.C. O'Connor's talk, titled "The Moral Crisis of Childhood Trauma: Hindering the Essential Arts of Personhood", emphasizes new research in Developmental Trauma Disorder and the difficulty of building a strong and secure identity after severe childhood trauma. Dr. Wilkerson's presentation on "Trauma, Depression, and Rituals of Daily Life" explores the relationship between trauma and depression, and how that affects ordinary living. Also of note will be a workshop presented by UNCA faculty Lise Kloeppe on embodiment and using movement techniques such as yoga for healing from traumatic effects, and a panel on Melissa Burchard's recent book, *Philosophical Reflections on Mothering in Trauma*.

A full program and registration information will be available soon on the UNCA Philosophy Department's webpage (<https://philosophy.unca.edu/conferences>). The conference is open to all but will charge a low registration fee to help cover costs. For information email Ashley McGhee at amcghee@unca.edu.