

World Summit on

# Psychiatry, Mental Health Nursing and Healthcare

International Conference on

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# Applied Psychology, Psychiatry and Mental Health

November 26-27, 2018 | Los Angeles, USA



## Louise Olivier

University of Pretoria, South Africa

### Principles and outcome of a group therapeutic intervention utilising wild animals in the african bush

**Statement of the problem:** Research regarding the mutual benefits of human-animal interaction has focussed primarily on domestic pets (dogs, cats, horses etc.). Animal-assisted interventions were found to reduce stress or distress, provide comfort, provided social support, assisted with behavioural change, increased motivation, helped facilitating new skills and inspiring social interaction and could facilitate decrease of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Human beings are however fascinated with wild animals and it was found that some animals are more tolerant of human interaction than others. The tolerance of wild animals for people is largely driven by the environment the animals live in and the body size of the animal. The group human interaction with wild animals (lions) and other wildlife are combined with the therapeutic techniques of Milton H Erickson such as waking hypnosis, seeding, metaphors and the utilization approach. A group of people is taken on a five-day safari to the African bush. During this safari, they are given the opportunity to in the morning interact with the animals and in the afternoon have a group therapy session with the psychologist. However, the psychologist in the morning when the group is interacting with the animals also utilize this time to do the therapeutic intervention with the group members, while the group is viewing or interacting with the animals. This is done by means of waking hypnosis utilizing seeding, metaphors and other Ericksonian techniques. A short video will be shown of the group interacting with lions and the intervention will be discussed.

### Biography

Louise Olivier completed her PhD at the University of Pretoria after qualifying as a Clinical- and Counselling Psychologist at the University of Johannesburg and North-West University. Her expertise lies in forensic psychology, neuropsychology, sex and couple's therapy, clinical psychology and human-animal interaction. She is trained in Ericksonian- and Ego-State Therapy and Medical Hypnoanalysis. She trained internationally in the USA, United Kingdom, Germany and Italy. She is presently on the Board of the Psychological Society of South Africa and has been President of the Society twice. She is also a member of the committees of the Health Professions Council of South Africa for Neuropsychology and Forensic Psychology. In 2009 she was awarded the prestigious Alumni award from the University of Pretoria for her contribution nationally and internationally in Forensic Psychology and Neuropsychology. She is the author of several books and many research papers.

[info@drlooise.co.za](mailto:info@drlooise.co.za)

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