



Andrea O'Reilly will explore how and why the image and role of 'good' motherhood has changed over the last eighty years in North America. Beginning with a discussion of the celebration of the working mother during WW II, to the glorification of the full time stay home mother in the 1950s and 60s and finally to the idealization of intensive mothering and helicopter parenting ... read more in the 1990s to contemporary times, Andrea will discuss how meanings and practices of good mothering are culturally reproduced as a result of, and in response to social and economic change.

Her talk will highlight that what culture defines as good mothering has little to do with the needs of children and everything to do with how society requires women to behave and function. As well, because the image of good motherhood is culturally produced, it creates expectations that are impossible for most mothers to meet leaving them feeling overwhelmed and blamed. However, as mothers come to realize that the mandates of good motherhood are not naturally derived but rather ideologically driven, they are empowered to control and develop their own authentic meanings and practices of mothering.

Understanding factors that affected our own mother's mothering may profoundly affect our understanding of our families and ourselves, whether we are mothers or not. In this time of cultural shift, it may help us better understand ways to empower the next generation.

The afternoon workshop **Empowering Mothers and Empowered Mothering**, a combined session for Education and Status of Women and Human Rights, will continue to explore these issues in smaller groups.

Andrea O'Reilly, PhD, is Professor in the School of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at York University. O'Reilly is founder and director of the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement, founder and editor-in-chief of the Journal of the Motherhood Initiative, and founder and publisher of Demeter Press. She is editor of 18 books including *Mothers, Mothering and Motherhood Across Cultural Differences: A Reader* and author of three monographs including *Matricentric Feminism: Theory, Activism, and Practice*. She is editor of the first Encyclopedia (3 Volumes, 705 entries) on Motherhood. She is a recipient of the CAUT Sarah Shorten Award for outstanding achievements in the promotion of the advancement of women in Canadian universities and colleges, is twice the recipient of York University's "Professor of the Year Award" for teaching excellence and in 2014 was the first inductee into the Museum of Motherhood Hall of Fame. She is the mother of three adult children.

Kathy Wosnick,
Education Chair