

COINN Conference 2025 in Zambia

Presentation title: Transforming Bereavement Care through Advocacy and Training

Presenter: Nonkululeko Shibula, certified bereavement doula, perinatal loss advocate, founder of Umzanyana and [ISA Board Member](#).



Attending the COINN Conference was both affirming and challenging. From my perspective as a bereaved parent and a professional working in bereavement care, my key takeaway is that Africa still has a long journey ahead in both preventing stillbirth and providing adequate support for families affected by loss.

In my presentation, “Transforming Bereavement Care through Advocacy and Training”, I shared the International Stillbirth Alliance (ISA) [toolkits](#), which sparked strong interest among participants in adapting these resources to African contexts. The need for culturally sensitive and practical tools remains urgent.

I also had the privilege of connecting with neonatal nurses who shared their lived experiences with loss.

Many expressed a deep hunger for tangible solutions that could be integrated into their health systems. These conversations underscored the compassion of frontline providers, as well as the urgent need for structured training, supportive policies, and care models that extend beyond survival to address the emotional and psychosocial needs of families.

I left the conference encouraged by the openness of these discussions, while also reminded of the critical gaps that still exist. Moving forward will require collaboration across disciplines and countries, alongside a shared commitment to breaking the silence around stillbirth and ensuring that families receive compassionate, holistic care.

I am deeply grateful to the International Stillbirth Alliance (ISA) for their sponsorship and for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this important global conversation. Your support made it possible for me to share not only my work, but also the lived realities of bereaved families in Africa.