

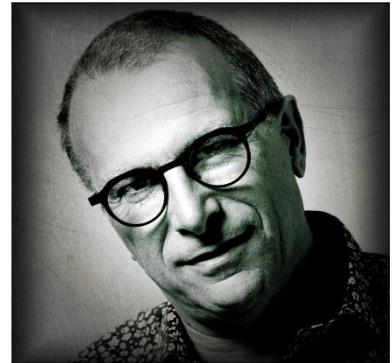


ICCT2025 Antwerp 27-28-29 October 2025 International Conference Contextual Therapy

The need for connection. Relationship challenges in today's world.

PETER ROBER – keynote speaker

Family Secrecy and Selective Disclosure: About what is said in families, what is not yet said and hesitations to speak.



Summary:

In families, there is always a tension between speaking and keeping silent.

Whatever is said in the between family members is a selection of what could have been said. This dialectic of openness and closeness, sharing and not sharing, revealing, and concealing has many forms and guises.

Sometimes things are kept secret deliberately. Some family members know, others don't know (although they may suspect, or sense there is something more than they know). Dealing with family secrecy may be a challenge for family therapists.

In this presentation, based on some detailed case studies, ideas will be presented of ways to deal with family secrecy in family therapy practice.

Presenter:

Peter Rober, PhD is clinical psychologist, family therapist and family therapy trainer at Context -Center for marital and family therapy (UPC KU Leuven, Belgium). He is professor at the Institute for Family and Sexuality Studies (medical school of K.U. Leuven, Belgium) where he teaches family therapy. His research interest areas focus on family therapy with children and on the therapy process, including especially the use of self of the therapist and the therapist's inner conversation. Peter Rober published several articles in international family therapy journals. Since 1992, he has presented international workshops on family therapy with children and adolescents. In 2017 he published the book *In Therapy Together: Family therapy as a dialogue* (Palgrave MacMillan). In 2024 his book *Becoming an Effective Family Therapist* (Routledge) was published.

Literature:

- Rober, P., Walravens, G. & Versteijnen, L. (2012). "In search of a tale they can live with": About loss, family secrets and selective disclosure. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 38, 529-541.
- Rober, P. & Rosenblatt, P. (2017). Silence and Memories of War: An Autoethnographic Exploration of Family Secrecy. *Family Process*, 56, 250-261.
- Deslypere, E., & Rober, P. (2020) Family Secrecy – A challenge for researchers. In Ochs, M., Borcsa, M. & Schweitzer, J. (Eds.). *Systemic Research in Individual, Couple, and Family Therapy and Counseling* (pp.191-204). Cham: Springer International.