



**CHRIST**  
UNIVERSITY

*A National Conference on  
'Changing Fabric  
of  
Intimate Relationships'  
Challenges to theories and practices in mental health*

**Pre-conference and Post-conference  
WORKSHOPS**

***Secrets in Families***

*Reena Nath*

12th February, 2009

***Sexuality and Diversity***

*Anita Ghai*

15th February, 2009

**Assembly Hall, Block II  
Christ University, Bangalore**

Organized by  
The Department of Psychology

# *Secrets in Families*

Family secrets refer to those events that are kept hidden from some family members by other family members, or events that are hidden by the family from the world. The taboo against speaking about secrets is very strong, though it is not necessarily pathological. Keeping family secrets can be, up to a certain limit, functional. Family secrets become a problem when they undermine mutual trust, inhibit dialogue and distort reality in such a way that family members' adaptability and development become restricted.

Because the content of family secrets are generally about actions or events that society considers disgraceful, they are imbued with intense feelings of fear, shame and guilt. Experience in family therapy has shown that impetuous 'unearthing' of family secrets, without reflection and dialogue about the consequence of disclosure can be painful. Worse, it is disrespectful of the family's wish to keep the secret. Circular questioning has proven to be an effective method of 'airing' the fears and fantasies of the family regarding disclosure, and once the fears have been explored, the necessity of keeping the secret often disappears.

In this workshop, we will cover

Definitions

Difference between secrets, privacy and confidentiality

Types of secrets

Secrets and symptoms

Secrets' impact on relationships

Effect on Communication

Clinical Issues posed by Secrets

The workshop will include exercises to connect participants with their experience of family secrets, and to facilitate reflection on the topic.

## ***About the Resource Person***

Reena Nath is currently working in Delhi as a psychotherapist, offering sessional work with individuals, couples and families. She has obtained her Masters In Systemic Psychotherapy from the, University of East London and The Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust, London, UK. Her work is also informed by psychodynamic ideas, cognitive behavioral therapy, Rogerian person-centred therapy, narrative and brief solution-focused therapy.

**Target audience:** Senior post graduate students and practising mental health professionals interested in issues of family, marriage and intimacy.

**Date** 12<sup>th</sup> February    **Time** 2.30pm-5.30pm    **Venue** Block II Assembly Hall

**Registration Reporting** 2 pm

**Registration:** Registration form attached

# *Sexuality and Diversity: A Critical perspective*

*The sexuality issues of disabled people have been invisible. Much of the educational and academic discourse has not reflected on the struggles of disabled people who are seen as asexual. Desire for disabled people is not recognized as 'natural'. Disabled people want intimate relationships like everyone else. So why does society appear so apprehensive to disregard, repudiate or stereotype their sexuality. The workshop will address the sexuality and disability issues. Who identifies whom as disabled? How and why do they do so? Who is excluded from such an identification? These questions would help illuminate the compulsory nature of able-bodiedness. How do the meanings of able-bodiedness, and of disability, both create and result from a system of compulsion? In what ways can we understand able-bodiedness as compulsory? The workshop will focus on the myths and stereotypes about the disabled people. Further, issues of identity, sexual relationships, sexual abuse, sex education, sexuality related services are important. For students and practitioners of mental health, engaging with disability issues thus becomes critical.*

*The workshop will also aim to look at questions such as: (1) sexuality as desire, (2) sexuality as victimization and violence (3) sexuality as individual morality/moral panic. The workshop will thus seek to address sexuality in a rights perspective. Sexual rights are important in and of themselves and also because they are important to enable the fulfillment of other rights such as the right to education, health and livelihood as well as the human right to live with dignity. The workshop further seeks to question the assumption that there is only one kind of desire - between a man and a woman. It is critical to challenge this assumption and facilitate the understanding that there is a wide diversity of desires. Deviation from existing norms of heterosexuality implies that people who are seen as disabled or transgender face severe human rights violations. The workshop therefore seeks to evolve an awareness that sexual desire is not unchanging – for example, someone who is attracted to the opposite sex could later be attracted to someone of the same sex and vice versa. It will also build a critical understanding of identities based on sexuality and gender transgression. While identities are important in terms of building communities and claiming rights, the workshop will enable a recognition of the reality that there are people who are disabled, attracted to people of the same sex, or attracted to transgender people but they might not have an identity based on their sexuality, often because they do not have exposure to these identities. The aim is to underscore the danger of approaching sexual diversity.*

## ***About the Resource Person***

*Anita Ghai teaches and researches in the Department of Psychology at Jesus and Mary College (Delhi University) in New Delhi, India. Her area of research is mainly disability focusing especially on education, health, sexuality and gender.*

**Target audience:** Post-graduate students and professionals in the field of mental health interested in issues of disability, sexuality, and rights.

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> February    **Time:** 10am-1pm

**Venue:** Block II Assembly Hall

**Registration Reporting:** 9:30am

**Registration:** Registration form attached



**Pre/Post Conference Workshop**  
**“CHANGING FABRIC IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS:**  
**CHALLENGES TO THEORIES AND PRACTICES IN MENTAL HEALTH”**

**Department of Psychology, Christ University, Bangalore-29**

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**Registration Form**

**Workshop attending: Pre-Conference / Post-Conference / Both (tick your choice)**

**Name of Participant:**

**Designation / Occupation:**

**Organization:**

**Address:**

**Phone/Mobile:**

**Email:**

**Amount: Rs. \_\_\_\_\_ to be remitted during workshop as: Cash / DD**

**Please e-mail the filled up form to:**

**[dahre.meenakshi@gmail.com](mailto:dahre.meenakshi@gmail.com)**

***NOTE: In view of very limited number of seats available in each of the workshops, you are requested to call up Ms. Meenakshi (+91-9902816196 from 4pm-8pm), Workshop Co-ordinator, to confirm your place in the workshop. You can bring either a DD or Cash for Rs.200 against registration fee. Both pre and post conference workshop fee would be Rs.400. In case of DD, it should be drawn in favour of “Vice Chancellor, Christ University”, payable at Bangalore.***