

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, January 31, 2022

Where: 360 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:00 pm

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Having and Keeping Secrets

ABSTRACT:

Common wisdom suggests that secrecy harms relationships and well-being because active concealment is hard and stressful work. Multiple studies of thousands of participants keeping tens of thousands of secrets reveals otherwise. The problem with having secrets is not that we have to hide them, but rather that we have to think about them, and live with them alone in our thoughts without others' help and perspectives. Whereas instances of concealment can be construed as effective goal pursuit (i.e., successful secret keeping), having secrets intrude upon one's thoughts is taken as a signal of relational and personal problems, including reduced relationship quality and reduced authenticity. Organizational secrecy, in contrast, brings some benefits to individual employees but also brings costs to employee well-being.

