

**Margreet Visser & Justine van Lawick.**

**The complexity of dialogical work with parents in high conflict.**

When high conflicts dominate family relations, all involved are caught in categorisations, in stories about the truth. Stories about self, identity, history and the other become fixed. Open, or radical, listening is prevented. Strong emotions, worries and fears dominate the conversations. Many utterings are part of the fights and can be understood as munitions, rather than authentic expressions. Children that live in this context often stop to speak about their inner life. They do not feel safety in speaking out and have the experience that what they say can be used in the fights of the parents. These dynamics spread through communities: the social networks around the parents and also the professional network. This makes psychotherapy and family therapy very complex and demanding. Margreet and Justine will share some of their experiences from clinical practice and research. Successes and failures. Also from their project 'no kids in the middle' where they work with families in high conflict divorce. Participants are invited to share experiences of working in the context of high conflict and violence. What happens to us, what inner dialogues are activated, where do we feel stuck, how can we open up dialogical space. Where do we find possibilities. Next to group dialogue we will do exercises and reflect on videoclips.