

Skillful Self-Disclosure

Summary and References Page

Types of Self-Disclosure

- **Non-verbal:** What can be interpreted but isn't explicitly said (e.g., visible tattoos, wedding rings, types of clothes, etc.)
- **Personal Life Information:** What we can disclose about our own personal life. On a spectrum from menial to deep information (e.g., "I like sunny days" ... "I been through that tragedy as well.")
- **Here-and-Now feelings:** What you feel toward the youth, either in the moment or generally (e.g., "I'm feeling frustrated right now" ... "I really care about you.")
- **Mechanisms of Work:** Being transparent about what you're asking of the youth (e.g., "I'm asking you to practice deep breathing because it can help with stress" ... "We have this policy because...")

What is skillful self-disclosure skillful?

Always ask yourself the following question(s) prior to disclosing anything:

- "Is what I'm about to say in the best interest of the young person?"
 - If yes, proceed to next question. If no, best not to disclose
- "What purpose does disclosing this serve for me?"
 - Are you disclosing this to be liked? For another reason? If yes, best not to disclose. If the purpose is to build the relationship, then possibly disclose

- “Can I handle disclosing this now?”
 - Are you ready for your whole class, group, unit to know what you’re doing to disclose (if they tell each other about what you said), and, are you emotionally ready to disclose (e.g., emotionally stable enough after death of parent?)

References

Yalom, I. D. (2009). *The gift of therapy: An open letter to a new generation of therapists and their patients*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.