

Positive Communication Activity
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Title:

Disclosure as a Pathway to Authentic Connection

Objectives:

This activity introduces students to the psychological barriers and benefits of disclosure. The objective is to get students more comfortable with disclosure and how it can lead to more authentic, deeper connections with their peers.

Description:

This classroom exercise occurs within a unit on leadership disclosure. One week prior to the unit, students are asked to write a paragraph in response to the following question: “What is the one thing you wished your classmates knew about you?” Students are informed that their responses will be shared with the entire class, but no names will be attached to the responses. Students submit an electronic version of their response, which are subsequently compiled. On the day of the unit, students are assigned to read the chapter on disclosure from *The Art of Positive Communication: Theory and Practice* as well as the collection of students’ responses.

During class, students first meet in small groups of roughly four to look for common themes that emerge.

These small group discussions are followed by a classroom discussion of the experience with the following questions used as prompts:

- Where there common themes?
- What was the experience like for you to share this information with classmates?
- How comfortable would you be with sharing this information with them directly? If you are hesitant, what gets in the way?
- What was it like for you to learn about what your peers wished to disclose?
- How does this experience connect with Mirivel’s description of disclosure?

The ensuing classroom discussion is often deep, authentic and one of compassion for each other. Students learn that their peers have many of the same worries they do and begin to consider how they initiate these valuable conversations and in doing so support their peers.

References:

Mirivel, J. C. (2014). *The art of positive communication; Theory and practice*. Peter Lang.
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