

FIVE LEVELS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

Level 5: Ice Breaker Communication

We first establish verbal contact with others by saying something that lets other people know that we acknowledge their presence.

Hi! How are you? How are you doin'? How's it goin'?

Level 4: Facts and Biographical information

After using Ice Breaker phrases and responses to establish contact, we reveal non-threatening information about ourselves, such as your name, hometown and occupation.

What church do you go to? Where do you work?

Level 3: Personal attitudes and ideas

After introducing ourselves and getting down to business, we then respond to various ideas and issues, noting where we agree and where we disagree. When we share our personal ideas, attitudes, and values, we open ourselves to greater possibilities for rejection by other group members. Sharing personal attitudes and ideas then involve more risk.

Level 2: Personal Feeling

Talking about our personal feelings makes us even more vulnerable than discussing our attitudes and ideas, particularly when we talk about our feelings regarding ourselves or others.

Level 1: Peak Communications

This is the ultimate level of self-disclosure. People seldom reach this level. Only with our closest friends or people who we have known for some time will share personal insights that may result in our being rejected by others. Task-oriented small group discussions rarely achieve peak communication. The highest level of self-disclosure may take much time and trust to develop.