

## Self-disclosure in formal and informal learning contexts: Connections with relationship development and wellbeing

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### Biography

*Dr Hilary Dutton (Ngāti Tūwharetoa) is a Post-Doctoral Fellow and Rutherford Scholar in the Faculty of Education, where she specialises in youth development research. Her research explores the development of high-quality youth-adult relationships to promote youth thriving, informed by Positive Youth Development and community psychology principles. Hilary's current research focuses on youth experiences of self-disclosure in youth mentoring and youth work programmes. Hilary is a trustee for the New Zealand Youth Mentoring Network.*

### ABSTRACT

Relationships are an integral part of successful learning. In both formal and informal contexts, relationships shape the development, success, and wellbeing of parties to the learning process. Self-disclosure is a communicative process that is broadly associated with the development of close and trusting interpersonal relationships, but it also carries risks and concerns when applied to non-familial relationships between adults and young people. In this presentation, I examine self-disclosure in two educative settings, beginning with student disclosures to staff in tertiary settings. I will present research findings that show the negative impact receiving disclosure has on the wellbeing of educators, and consider the implications for an already stressed workforce. I will then address self-disclosure in youth mentoring relationships. Youth mentoring is a popular relationship-based intervention that occurs in community and school settings, and often used to support academic development. I will share findings from a study that investigated the connection between disclosure and relationship quality, highlighting the complex responses of mentees to both their own and their mentors' disclosure. These narratives will be woven together to consider what disclosure means for the relationships that are so important to learning and development, unpacking the benefits and challenges of disclosure in these settings. Attendees will be encouraged to reflect on their own experiences and practices of disclosure to consider how they might be able to harness the power of self-disclosure to enrich the relationships they have with the young people they work with.