



Department of Psychology Colloquium Series



Self-protective yet self-defeating: The paradox of low self-esteem people's self-disclosures

Thursday, February 1, 2018
2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
306 Southam Hall



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People with low self-esteem (LSEs) worry about whether other people like them, so they approach interpersonal life self-protectively. Whereas people with high self-esteem (HSEs) seek rewards, LSEs are more focused on avoiding losses—avoiding rejection or any sign that their value to others is diminishing. My collaborators and I have been examining how LSEs' self-protectiveness influences their self-disclosures. We have found that LSEs in general are less expressive and self-revealing than HSEs. They often inhibit self-disclosures, seemingly so as to avoid revealing their flaws. However, when they do self-disclose, LSEs often express a lot of negativity, emphasizing

negative emotions and unpleasant experiences. Other people do not like such negativity. Hence, LSEs may bring about the very rejection that they fear. Can you help us solve this puzzle?