INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

KEY CONCEPTS - GLOSSARY

Interpersonal Process – Week 1

**Channel**

The medium through which a message is conveyed.

**Co-Culture**

A subgroup that is part of an encompassing culture.

**Cognitive Complexity**

The ability to construct a variety of different frameworks for viewing an issue.

**Communication Competence**

Effective and appropriate forms of communication, which include the following skills: adaptability, involvement, ability to perform skillfully, empathy and perspective taking, cognitive complexity, self monitoring.

**Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)**

Technological methods of communication including email, text message, Facebook, etc.

**Content Message**

Information explicated being discussed.

**Culture**

There are up to 500 ways to define “culture.” In a broad sense, ‘the language, values, beliefs, traditions, and customs people share and learn.

” ( 22).

**Dyad**

Two persons who are interacting.

**Environment**

In communication terminology environment refers not only to the physical location, but also to the personal experiences and cultural backgrounds that the participants bring to the conversation. Environments are not always obvious.

**Ethnocentrism**

The belief that on’e own culture is superior to others.

**In-Group**

Groups of people with whom we identify.

**Intercultural Communications**

The process by which members of two or more cultures exchange messages in a manner that is influenced by their different cultural perceptions and symbol systems.

**Noise** (external, physiological, psychological)

Anything that interferes with the transmission and reception of a message such as external noise, physiological noise, and psychological noise.

**Out-Groups**

Groups of people whom we view as different.

**Prejudice**

An unfairly biased and intolerant attitude toward others who belong to an out-group.

**Qualitative Interpersonal Communication**

Focus on the nature of the interaction between the people involved in terms of its uniqueness, irreplaceability, amount of disclosure, and intrinsic rewards as well as the interdependence of the people involved.

**Quantitative Interpersonal Communication**

Defines interpersonal communication as the number of people involved.

**Relational Message**

How the communicators feel about each other.

**Self-Monitoring**

The process of paying close attention to one’s own behaviour and using these observations to shape the way one behaves and move a part of their consciousness outside of themselves.

**Stereotyping**

Exaggerated generalizations about a group.

**Transactional**

A dynamic process created by the participants through their interaction with one another.

Communication and the Self – Week 2

**Benevolent Lie**

Is a lie that is defined (at least by the person who tells it) as not being malicious—and perhaps it is even helpful to the person it is told to.

**Breadth**

The first dimension of self-disclosure in the self-penetration model involves the range of subjects being discussed.

**Cognitive Conservatism**

The tendency to look for information that conforms to an existing self-concept.

**Collectivistic Culture**

Communicators who feel loyalties and obligations to an in-group; for example, one’s extended family or community, or even the organization one works for.

**Depth**

A self-disclosing statement is generally regarded as being personal—containing relatively’ deep’ rather than ‘surface’ information. What is personal and intimate for one person my not be for another. Depth is considered the second dimension of disclosure being volunteered—the shift from relatively unrevealing message to ore personal ones. For example do you use clichés, facts, opinions, or feelings in the process of disclosure?

**Distorted Feedback**

A self-concept might also be excessively favourable which creates distortion of one’s perception of self. Low self-esteem can also be caused by distorted feedback.

**Equivocal Language**

Lying is not the only alternative to self-disclosure. When faced with the choice between lying and telling an unpleasant truth, communicators can—and often do—equivocate, which results with two or more equally plausible meanings and also lack of clarity. See the following table:

**EQUIVOCAL**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| OPTION I  (Equivocal, True Message)  “What an unusual painting! I’ve never seen anything like it.” | OPTION II  (Equivocal, False Message)  “Thanks for the painting. I’ll hang it as soon as I can find just the right place.” |
| OPTION III  (Clear, True Message)  “It’s just not my kind of painting. I don’t like the colours, the style, or the subject.” | OPTION IV  (Clear, False Message)  “What a beautiful painting! I love it.” |

**FALSE**

**TRUE**

**CLEAR**

**Face**

Sociologist Erving Goffman used the word “face” to describe a socially approved identity. He coined the term “facework.”

**Facework**

The verbal and non-verbal ways in which we act to maintain our own presenting image and the images of others.

**Honesty**

Communicating to the best of your knowledge.

**Hinting**

Hints are more direct than equivocal statements. Whereas an equivocal message is not necessarily aimed at changing another’s behaviour, a hint seeks to get the desired response from the other person. For example, a direct statement would be “I’m too busy to continue with this conversation. The alternative face-saving hint would be “I know you are busy; I’d better let you go.”

**Identity Management**

In a sense, we perform as actors trying to create a front, our ‘audience’ is made up of other actors who are trying to create their own characters. Identity-related communication is a form of process theatre in which we improvise scenes where our character reacts with others. How we play our identity roles shifts from “theatre” to “theatre” space and can be both deliberate and unconscious. This not only includes face-to-face impressions but also constructing our resumé.

**Individualistic Culture**

Members view their primary responsibility as helping themselves and are characterized by self-reliance and competition.

**Johari Window**

A way to illustrate how self-disclosure operates in communication is a model called the Johari Window, developed by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. See the model below, which imagines a frame that contains everything there is to know about you. This frame could be divided into information you know about yourself and things you don’t know. It could also be split into things others know about you and things they don’t know. You learn information in the ‘blind’ area primarily through feedback from others. The ‘hidden’ area is information that you know but are not wiling to reveal to others. The elements in this area become public primarily through self-disclosure. The ‘unknown’ area is what is still to be discovered about one’s self.

**Known to self Not known to self**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1  OPEN | 2  BLIND |
| 3  HIDDEN | 4  UNKNOWN |

**Known to others**

**Not known to others**

**Lie**

A lie is a deliberate attempt to hide or misrepresent the truth.

**Myth of Perfection**

Another cause of low self-esteem is the exposure to models that appear to be perfect, or ones that create a myth of perfection.

**Negative Moods**

There are times when we view ourselves more harshly than the facts warrant and we are far to critical of ourselves which effects our self-concept and creates negativity.

**Obsolete Information**

There are several reasons why some people have a self-concept that others would regard as unrealistically favourable. First, a self-estimation might be based on information that is no longer realistic. Perhaps your grades used to be high or your work superior, but now facts have changed.

**Perceived Self**

The person you believe yourself to be in moments of honest self-examination. The perceived self may not be accurate in every respect.

**Presenting Self**

In contrast to the “perceived self,” the presenting self is a public image —the way we want to appear to others.

**Reference Groups**

Those people we use to evaluate our own characteristics.

**Reflected Appraisal**

Perceptions of the judgments of those around you shape your self-concept to the extent that you have received supportive messages you have learned to appreciate and value yourself. Alternatively, you may have perceived critical signals that could lead you to feel less valuable, loveable, capable, and safe.

**Self-Concept**

A relatively stable set of perceptions you hold of yourself. These conceptions can takes place in response to major life transitions.

**Self-Control**

Is sometimes called self-regulation and it involves your ability to change your thoughts, emotions, moods, impulses, or performance of some task in order to achieve a personal goal or conform to a social or cultural expectation.

**Self-Disclosure**

A method of sharing information about one’s self to others that has both risks and benefits. Of course, self-disclosure depends deeply on the context. Disclosures shift a relationship to a more personal level. Self-disclosure 1) has the self as subject, 2) is intentional, 3) is directed at another person, 4) is honest, 5) is revealing, 6) contains information generally unavailable from other sources, and 7) gains much of its intemate nature from the context and culture in which it is expressed. To follow are among some of the formations of disclosure:

**\* Catharsis**

A form of self-disclosure in an effort to ‘get something off your chest.’ It involves a process of relieving the burden of pent-up emotions.

**\* Self-Clarification**

Gaining insight by talking about beliefs, thoughts, opinions, and attitudes.

**\* Self-Validation**

A method to seek confirmation about your behaviour or a belief that you hold about yourself.

**\* Reciprocity**

Releasing personal information my trigger the self-disclosure by others, and your own honesty can create a climate that makes the other person feel safer and not alone if they have a parallel experience.

**\* Impression formation**

At times we reveal information to make ourselves appear more sincere, interesting, sensitive, or curious about the other person.

**\* Maintenance and enhancement of relationships**

Foster liking and maintain healthy relationships.

**\* Moral obligation**

An example of moral self-disclosure is if an individual has a sexually transmittable disease and is in a romantic relationship with another.

**\* Social influence**

Disclosing information to exert control over others.

**\* Self-Defence**

Disclosing something before someone else does.

There are also risks with self-disclosure, such as rejection (may cause disapproval), negative impression (it may make you look bad), decrease in relational satisfaction (relationship can suffer from disclosure), loss of influence (revealing your weakness and you may have less influence); loss of control (people can tell others what you have disclosed and thus control information that you want to manage); hurting another person’s feelings (cause another person to be upset); and increasing the awareness of yourself to others (self-discovery through disclosure can be difficult or painful). However, negative, these aspects seem they also paradoxically could have positive outcomes.

Self-disclosure is a special kind of sharing that is not desirable in every situation and it is important to consider the following: Is the other person is important to you? Is the risk of disclosing reasonable? IS the self-disclosure appropriate? IS the disclosure relevant to the situation at hand? Is the disclosure reciprocated? Will the effect be constructive?

**Self-Esteem**

A part of your self-concept that involves evaluations of self-worth, for example, being quiet, serious, introverted, etc. How well we do things that matter or have value to our being. The relationship between self-esteem and communication behaviour could be seen as cyclical and involve both positive and negative thought patterns.

**Self-Fulfilling Prophecy**

When a person’s expectations of an event and their subsequent behaviour based on those expectations make the anticipated outcome more likely to happen than it would otherwise be. Such prophecies can be self-imposed (influenced by your own behaviour) or governed by the behaviour of others.

**Significant Other**

A person whose evaluations are especially influential.

**Silence**

Keeping silent is one way to avoid disclosing information you would rather keep private. Silence however is not always a conscious decision. Silencing is also complex and powerful method of coercion that ensures that an individual’s information is not disclosed.

**Social Comparison**

How we evaluate ourselves in terms of how we compare with others.

**Social Context**

Our identities are shaped by our age and place in history, our experiences, our sex, our sexual orientation, gender, race, class, our physical abilities, and our cultural background. These elements create the larger social context in which our self-concept develop.

**Social Expectations**

How we have come to believe we should present our self-concepts outwardly; for example, conventional norms could lead some of us to talk freely about our shortcomings while downplaying our accomplishments.

**Social Penetration Model**

Social psychologists describe the SPM to demonstrate the breadth and depth of disclosure and the levels in which it is communicated.

Works Cited

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