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Chapter 2 Activity: Perception Checking (10 Points)

After reading Section 2.4 of the textbook, complete this worksheet. When you are finished, upload the document to the assignment page in Canvas.

**Overview**

Perception checking is a strategy to help us monitor our reactions to and perceptions about people and communication. A perception-checking statement is a message we create to scrutinize our understanding of someone’s words or behavior. The benefits of perception-checking statements include the following:

* It helps us decode messages more accurately (mutual understanding and communication competence);
* It reduces defensiveness and the potential for conflict (avoid assuming too much).

Perception checking has three parts:

1. Description: an objective observation of the other person’s behavior (what bothers you)
2. Interpretation: consideration of **two** possible rationales for the behavior (your best guess about the reason for the behavior)
3. Verification: a request for clarification from the person to explain his/her behavior either to reinforce or to challenge your interpretations

**Instructions**

1. Read the two scenarios below.
2. For each one, create a perception check as if you are interacting with the person involved. Provide a descriptive statement, express what might be going through your mind about the person’s behavior (interpretation), and then articulate how you might verify the person’s actions and/or behavior.
3. After creating your perception check, think about your initial interpretations. Briefly explain which of the **common perceptual barriers** might have played a role in the rationales you initially considered. (See **Section 2.4 in the textbook**.) Note: if you interpretations were accurate, consider what barriers you overcame to arrive at the explanations you anticipated.

**Scenario 1**

A good friend from your workplace has not joined you for your regular lunchtime walks during the past three days even though you’ve left her messages to let her know that you miss her and would like for her to join you for a stroll. She usually responds to your messages or walks with you. Recently, she hasn’t responded.

**My Perception Check**

Description: My friend has not had lunch with me or responded to my messages for the last three days.

Interpretations (2): My friend could be ignoring me because they are angry with me. My friend could be sick and unwilling to communicate through messages while they’re recovering.

Verification: I could ask a friend or relative of hers to check on her to make sure she is alright and see what’s going on.

Potential Perception Barriers: Expectations play a large role in this situation as I’m used to the routine of dining and chatting with them almost every day, I need to rationalize my expectations not being met in some other way.

**Scenario 2**

A best friend with whom you have shared all of your secrets for years has recently changed when around you. The former casual conversations about school and home have not been the same; and on occasion you’ve had to talk up and/or repeat what you previously said a couple of times just to grab his/her attention.

**My Perception Check**

Description: My friend and I don’t connect like we used to.

Interpretations (2): We’ve grown apart and our interests no longer align with one another. My friend has a distraction that’s been bothering them about me recently.

Verification: I could confront them and ask what they think has been going on. See if they have noticed like we have that our dynamic has changed.

Potential Perception Barriers: This is another scenario in which our expectations play a large role. I’m used to our relationship, banter, and dynamic to be a certain way. When it feels off my head starts spinning to come up with a solution as to why things have changed between us. I also might not have had empathetic enough listening skills, and may have missed something that was important to them that they said and I ignored.