INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Interpersonal communication is the informal exchange of information between two or more people - two-person, face-to-face interaction (dyadic communication).

Continuum - from dyadic to interpersonal. Developmental approach suggests that something special must occur to turn ordinary, impersonal, dyadic interaction into interpersonal communication. When

1. The rules governing the relationship
2. The amount of data communicators have about one another and
3. The communicators’ level of knowledge change

dyadic communication becomes interpersonal.

Interpersonal communication is a special kind of dyadic communication, characterized by:
   o Development of personally negotiated rules
   o Increased information exchange
   o Progressively deeper levels of knowledge.

Communication Rules - tell us how to communicate with one another:

1. Cultural level rules - most general, apply to all members; use with strangers
2. Sociological level rules - tied to group membership
3. Psychological level rules - used with people we know well - made up by interactants

A relationship is an association between at least two people and may be described in terms of intimacy, kinship, roles, time, activities and participation.

Characteristics of relationships

1. Context - two aspects:
   a. Setting - physical environment
   b. Social-psychological environment - climate
      i. Confirmation and disconfirmation
      ii. Supportiveness and defensiveness

2. Time
3. Information sharing
   a. Social Penetration Theory - Onion
      1. breadth - variety
      2. depth - intimacy

4. Trust
5. Affection
6. Control

Motivation to form relationships

1. Provide comfort and support - feeling of security
2. Help develop a sense of self
3. Allow to maintain stable views of ourselves over time - validate our perception of ourselves and our social worlds.

Uncertainty reduction theory
People have an urge or need to reduce uncertainty about individuals that they find attractive and this motivates them to communicate.

Predicted outcome value theory - people connect with others because they believe that rewards or positive outcomes will result.

Schutz's theory of interpersonal needs
We communicate because of 3 basic needs:

1. Affection - need to feel likable or lovable
   a. Personal - adequately fulfilled need, liked by many;
   b. Underpersonal - avoid emotional commitment or involvement, fear of others not liking them
   c. Overpersonal - go to extremes to ensure acceptance by others; often disclose very intimate information; are jealous and possessive of their friends;

2. Inclusion - need to feel significant and worthwhile
   a. Social - confident, assertive, satisfied
   b. Undersocial - shy, loners, afraid of communicating
   c. Oversocial - attempt to dominate each conversation, often speak out of turn, find it hard to keep quiet

3. Control - need for responsibility and leadership - people have need to control others and their surroundings
   a. Abdicrats - submissive
   b. Autocrats - domineering
   c. Democrats - comfortable in both roles of leader and follower, open-minded, tolerant

Social Exchange Theory
People consciously and deliberately weigh the costs and rewards associated with a relationship and seek relationships that reward them and avoid those that are costly.

Reward is anything that is PERCEIVED as beneficial, and cost is anything that is PERCEIVED as not beneficial - refer to outcomes such as time, energy, anxiety, love, etc.

Reward-cost ratio - profitable, not profitable

Value or weight of reward or cost
Predicted reward, predicted cost
Perception of what is reward or what is cost can change over time.

Influences

a. Proximity
b. Similarity
c. Attraction
   i. Social attraction
   ii. Physical attraction
   iii. Task attraction
Knapp's Stages of Relational Development

- **Initiating** - Partners try to create favorable impression; observe for cues about personality, attitudes and willingness to engage in further interactions; look for ways to open communication channels; communication is cautious and shallow

- **Experimenting** - Search for common ground; phatic communication

- **Intensifying** - self-disclosure increases; terms of endearment, nicknames, 'we' and 'us'; satisfaction and excitement - high

- **Integrating** - couple; social circles merge; intimacy trophies; perception of unity, 'our' song

- **Bonding** - Public ritual to legitimize relationship

Knapp's Stages of Relationship Dissolution

- **Differentiating** - 'Yours' and 'mine'; notice and comment on previously overlooked differences - highlighted

- **Circumscribing** - 'Let's just skip that'; communication is restricted

- **Stagnating** - Silence and inactivity; communication is infrequent and rigid

- **Avoiding** - Physical or emotional separation; spending time apart or ignoring the other

- **Terminating** - Relationship is over; announcement of separation, summary of what has occurred; future interaction determined

Caution - not all couples go through all the stages of dissolution - you can be in one and not progress to the next one, but go back; people are not always synchronized; people have different perceptions of where they are

Duck's Relational Dissolution Model

- **Breakdown** - dissatisfaction with relationship
  - Threshold - I can't stand this anymore

- **Intrapsychic phase** - thinking it over, evaluating (rewards, costs)
  - Threshold - I am justified

- **Dyadic phase** - partners confront one another; try to repair damage
  - Threshold - I mean it

- **Social phase** - social support network intervention, effects
  - It's now inevitable

- **Grave-dressing phase** - each party determines the meaning of the time together, what went wrong, who's to blame; rationalization and explanation of the relationship

Dialectical theory

Dialectics - simultaneous opposing tensions; are in all of us; have to be balanced;

- **Connection** - autonomy

- **Oppeness** - closedness

- **Novelty** - predictability
CONFLICT

Is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who PERCEIVE incompatible goals, scarce resources and interference from others in achieving their goals.

Can be destructive and constructive.

Interest/identity based

Causes

- Faulty attributions
- Faulty communication
- Human tendency to perceive own views as objective, and others’ as biased – self-serving bias
- Personal traits
- Intrapersonal conflict

Expressing conflict

- Withdrawing - walk away or change the subject
- Accommodating - give in
- Forcing - push it all the way; competition; win-lose mentality
- Compromise - each party gives up part of what he/she wants
- Collaboration - problem-solving - coming up with new, creative solution