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IPC
Chapter Two: Communication, Perception, and the Self
Instructor Manual

Chapter Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. We perceive the world around us with a personal lens.
 - B. We can't talk about perception unless we talk about how those perceptions influence and affect our sense of self.
 - C. Perceiving requires an understanding of the self; we cannot talk about perception without also talking about how it relates to the self.

- II. Understanding Perception: A Seesaw Experience
 - A. **Perception** is a process of using our senses to respond to stimuli.
 - B. There are four stages of the interpersonal perception process.
 1. The first stage is attending and selecting.
 - a) This requires us to use our visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory senses to respond to stimuli in our interpersonal environment.
 - b) We are considered **mindful** when we are selective and attentive.
 - c) **Selective perception** involves attending to things that fulfill our own needs or interests; we pay attention to some things, and ignore others.
 - d) Selective perception occurs regularly in our relationships with others.
 2. The second stage is organizing.
 - a) This requires us to place what are often a number of confusing pieces of information into an understandable, accessible, and orderly fashion.
 - b) We frequently categorize when we organize.
 - c) **Relational schemas** are usually created during this phase; this entails developing a mental framework or memory structure to help understand experiences and guide future behaviors.
 - d) We need to establish a way to understand something or someone. Schemas help us accomplish this task.
 - e) When organizing we also tend to look for consistencies rather than inconsistencies.
 - f) Organizing expedites the perception process.
 - g) However, one of the problems that can occur when organizing perceptions is stereotyping.
 - h) **Stereotyping** occurs when broad generalizations are used to communicate with individuals as if they belong to certain groups, and the result tends to be the creation of a fixed mental image of groups.
 - i) Stereotypes can be positive or negative.
 3. The third stage is interpreting.
 - a) During this stage, people assign meaning to what they perceive.
 - b) Interpreting is required in every interpersonal encounter. We need to achieve meaning for interpersonal communication to occur.

- c) Interpretation is influenced by relational history, personal expectations, and knowledge of the self and other.
 - d) One's personal expectations of an individual or situation can impact interpretation.
 - e) Knowledge of oneself and others can influence interpretation of behavior.
4. The fourth stage is retrieving.
- a) During this stage, individuals are asked to recall information stored in their memories.
 - b) The retrieval process also involves selection of memories.
 - c) **Selective retention** is a behavior that recalls information that agrees with our perceptions and selectively forgets information that does not.
 - d) When we exercise selective retention in the perception process, our communication with others is affected.

III. Influences on Perception

A. The first factor is culture.

- 1. Culture provides the meaning we give to our perceptions.
- 2. Culture dictates how something should be organized and interpreted.
- 3. Cultural heritage affects how people perceive the world. In turn, the same cultural heritage affects how people communicate with and receive communication from others.

B. The second factor is sex and gender.

- 1. **Sex** refers to the biological makeup of an individual (male or female).
- 2. **Gender** refers to the learned behaviors a culture associates with being a male or female.
- 3. If we possess both masculine and feminine traits in equally large amounts, we are called androgynous.
- 4. Possessing relatively low amounts of masculinity and femininity is termed undifferentiated.
- 5. Research examining sex differences show that men and women differ in their perceptions and perceptual ability.
- 6. Many of these differences are a result of the way men and women have been raised.
- 7. **Gender role socialization** is the process by which women and men learn the gender roles appropriate to their sex.
- 8. Sandra Bem (1993) notes that when we understand and organize our world around masculinity and femininity we are using a gender schema.
- 9. Through a schema we process and categorize beliefs, ideas, and events as either masculine or feminine. If new information does not fit, we simply discard it.
- 10. Ivy & Backlund (2003) believe that men and women may look at things differently depending on what **gender schema** they bring to a circumstance.

C. The third factor is physical factors.

- 1. The physical factors affecting perception are wide in scope.
- 2. Life experiences are framed through the aging process.
- 3. Physical health shapes perceptions as well.

- D. The fourth factor is technology.
 1. Now more than ever, technology affects our perceptions.
 2. The Internet, in particular, which has little oversight and no accountability, requires us to be critical in our perceptions.
 3. Technology also makes possible the cultivation of online relationships.
 4. However, the perception process is influenced differently in online relationships than in face-to-face relationships.
 5. False information may be provided.
 6. We are unable to read the facial expressions, listen to the vocal characteristics, look at the clothing, watch the body movement, and observe the eye contact of the other person.
 7. We receive only what the other person wants us to receive.
 8. We also communicate only what we wish to communicate with the other person as well.
 9. Other technological devices also impact the interpersonal perception process, such as the cell phone, iPhone and palm organizer.
- E. The fifth factor is one's sense of self.
 1. The perceptions that we hold of ourselves are influential in the perception process.
 2. **Self-concept** is the relatively stable set of perceptions a person holds of himself or herself.
 3. Our self-concept tends to be rather consistent from one situation to another.
 4. Self-concept is also flexible, depending on contextual factors.
 5. Self-concept affects our perceptions; statements from people we trust and respect tend to carry more weight than statements made by those we don't trust or respect.

IV. Understanding the Self: The "I's" Have It

- A. The self-concept is a set of relatively fixed perceptions we hold of ourselves.
- B. Self concepts are not permanent – they can change.
- C. Self-concepts emerge from our various interpersonal encounters with others.
- D. Mead (1934) developed the theory of **symbolic interactionism**. This theory suggests that our understandings of ourselves and the world around us are shaped by our interactions with those around us.
- E. Self-concept may be influenced by two factors.
 1. **Self awareness** is our understanding of who we are.
 - a) This develops throughout our lives, starting when we are quite young.
 - b) Parents, guardians, or family members play an important role (especially early in life).
 2. **Self-esteem** is an evaluation of who we perceive ourselves to be; our self-esteem is our self-worth or how we feel about our talents, abilities, knowledge, expertise, and appearances.
 - a) Our self-esteem comprises the images we hold, such as our social roles, the words we use to describe these social roles, and how others see us in these roles.
 - b) We develop our self-esteem as a result of overcoming setbacks, achieving our goals, and helping others in their pursuits.

- c) Our feelings of self-worth may not be jeopardized if we think that we have beaten obstacles along the way.
 - d) Other people do not always enhance our feelings of self-worth.
 - e) Others may, at times, unwittingly contribute to our negative self-perceptions.
 - f) Self-esteem may fluctuate, often due to our interactions with others.
- F. The self is also formed in part, by the predictions you make about yourself.
 - 1. A **self-fulfilling prophecy** occurs when something happens because you expected it to happen.
 - a) These prophecies may be *self-imposed* when your own expectations influence your behavior.
 - b) These prophecies may also be *other-imposed* when the expectations of another person influence your behavior.
 - 2. Self-fulfilling prophecies usually follow a four-stage pattern.
 - a) During stage one, we form expectations of ourselves, others, or particular events.
 - b) During stage two, we communicate those expectations to others.
 - c) During stage three, others respond to our behaviors.
 - d) During stage four, our expectations become reality, and our expectations confirm our original thinking about ourselves.
 - e) Each stage returns to the first stage, because the original perception prompted the prophecy itself.

- V. Identity Management: Let's Face It
 - A. **Identity management theory** (Cupach and Imahori, 1993) refers to the ways we handle ourselves in various situations.
 - B. We decide on a particular communication behavior to influence how others perceive us.
 - C. Another important reason to communicate our identities is to become an active citizen, voicing our identities.
 - D. Goffman (1959) posited that identity was best explained using an analogy to theatrical performance; when a person appears before others, s/he will have various motives for attempting to control the impression those others receive of the situations.
 - 1. Goffman suggests that we are actors who “perform” for the audience surrounding us.
 - 2. Dillard et al (2000) add that the actor wishes to have the audience take the performance seriously.
 - E. Identity management does not happen without some risk and consequence; we may find ourselves in a situation that compromises our sense of self.
 - F. Identity management and facework; the image of the self that we present to others in our interpersonal encounters is called **face**.
 - 1. Generally, face is somewhat automatic.
 - 2. Domenici and Littlejohn (2006) suggest that the essence of face is dignity, honor and respect.
 - 3. We take for granted that there is some give and take in maintaining face, entailing a transactional nature.
 - 4. Both communicators in an interaction are responsible for facework.

5. **Positive face** pertains to our desire to be liked by significant others in our lives; we have positive face when others make efforts to confirm our beliefs, respect our abilities, and value what we value.
 6. **Negative face** refers to our desire for others to refrain from imposing their will on us; negative face is maintained when people respect our individuality and our uniqueness and others avoid interfering with our actions or beliefs.
 7. When we receive messages that do not support either our positive or negative face, our identities become threatened.
 - a) When our positive face is threatened, we have to figure out how to deal with the threat to our identity.
 - b) This process happens frequently and we have to learn how to handle face threats.
 - c) In the United States, we are normally not conditioned to help others “save” their face, although this is not the case for all cultures (e.g., Asian cultures).
- G. There are different strategies to assist in identity management.
1. The first strategy is pay attention to timing; sometimes it is okay to stay silent in a conversation rather than asserting a particular identity with another.
 2. The second strategy is not to worry about the future.
 - a) Forget worrying about the future; commit to the conversation now.
 - b) Show that you are involved in what is going on and focus on what’s taking place.
 3. The third strategy is practice self-monitoring.
 - a) People vary in their abilities to pay attention to their own actions and the actions of others.
 - b) **Self-monitoring** refers to the extent to which people actively think about and control their public behaviors and actions.
 - c) People who are aware of their behaviors and the effects of their behaviors in a conversation are viewed as more competent communicators.

VI. Perception, the Self, and Interpersonal Communication

- A. The following conclusions regarding perception, the self, and interpersonal communication illustrate how the three are closely related.
1. **Implicit personality theory** suggests that we fill in the blanks when identifying characteristics of people.
 - a) We use a few characteristics to draw inferences about others.
 - b) We believe that certain traits go together and communicate with people on this basis.
 - c) The **halo effect** refers to when you match like qualities with each other.
 - (1) A **positive halo** occurs when you place positive qualities together.
 - (2) A **negative halo** exits when you place negative qualities together.

- d) Implicit personality theory enables us to effectively manage a lot of information about another person, but we should be careful not to overuse it.
- e) We should not perceive characteristics in a person that don't exist. Responding to people according to such predispositions can lead to problems in interpersonal communication.
- 2. Perceptual errors can lead to problems in our communication with others.
 - a) **Attribution theory** (Heider, 1958) examines how we create explanations or attach meaning to someone's behavior.
 - (1) We try to uncover reasons for people's actions, yet we may have no real understanding of the person nor the circumstances surrounding the actions.
 - (2) The attribution process can be problematic because our attributions are often influenced by our feelings for another person.
- 3. The self undergoes a continual process of modification that also impacts interpersonal communication.
 - a) Our sense of who we are changes as our relationships change.
 - (1) Our identity is a process, not a constant.
 - (2) This suggests that we and our relationships are changing.
 - b) Interpersonal communication should reflect the changes in ourselves and our relationships.
 - c) The self responds to stimuli. We respond to people, surroundings, and technology.

VII. Choices for Checking Perceptions and Improving Self-Concept

- A. There are many ways to improve perception checking.
 - 1. When we check our perceptions, we attempt to rid ourselves of predisposed biases and images of people that we hold.
 - 2. Checking our perceptions also helps build meaning in our relationships.
- B. There are five skills associated with perception checking.
 - 1. The first skill is understand your personal worldview.
 - a) Each of us enters a communication situation with a unique worldview.
 - b) A **worldview** is a personal frame for viewing life and life's events.
 - c) We all enter interpersonal encounters with various worldviews, and we need to recognize the influence that these various views have upon our communication.
 - 2. The second skill is realize the incompleteness of perception.
 - a) There is no possible way for us to perceive our environment completely.
 - b) By its nature, perception is an incomplete process.
 - c) We should recall that people, objects, and situations change, thereby making it important to update your perceptions periodically.
 - 3. The third skill is seek explanation and clarification.
 - a) We need to double-check with others to make sure that we are accurately perceiving a person, situation, or event.

- b) Trying to understand whether or not our perceptions are accurate communicates to others that you are eager to gain an accurate understanding, which will help you achieve meaning in the interpersonal exchange.
 - 4. The fourth skill is to distinguish facts from inferences.
 - a) **Facts** are statements based on observations.
 - b) **Inferences** are personal interpretations of facts.
 - c) We must take care to avoid filling in the blanks or extending a perception beyond the facts.
 - d) It may not be a question of if you are using an inference, but of whether or not you are aware of its use.
 - 5. The fifth skill is be patient and tolerant.
 - a) Because we live in an “instant society,” we expect things to happen quickly.
 - b) Without patience and tolerance, you won’t be able to check the accuracy of your perceptions.
 - c) However, it often takes time and practice to learn these skills.
- C. There are five skills associated with improving your self-concept.
 - 1. The first skill is have the desire and will to change.
 - a) Our self-concept changes as we grow, so we should be willing to change our self-concepts throughout our lifetimes.
 - b) Having the desire or will to change your self-concept is not always easy.
 - c) We need to realize that a changing self-concept can help us to grow just as much as it can help our relationships grow.
 - 2. The second skill is decide what you’d like to change.
 - a) Describe what it is specifically about yourself that needs to change.
 - b) Describe why you feel a change may be needed.
 - 3. The third skill is set reasonable personal goals.
 - a) Always strive to have reasonable goals.
 - b) One should not set goals that s/he can not meet, or they may feel a sense of failure.
 - 4. The fourth skill is review and revise.
 - a) At times, you may make changes to your self-concept that are not entirely beneficial.
 - b) Think about the implication of these changes and consider revising them if necessary.
 - c) Occasions in which you revise past changes may force you to think about whether changes to your self-concept were justified in the first place or whether they are appropriate for you now.
 - 5. The fifth skill is surround yourself with “relational uppers.”
 - a) **Relational uppers** are those people who support and trust you as you improve your self-concept.
 - b) Take care to surround yourself with relational uppers because these individuals will be instrumental for you to achieve your potential.

Chapter Two Activities

2.1 This activity is designed to help students understand what occurs during the stages of interpersonal perception: attending and selecting, organizing, interpreting, and retrieving.

- A. Select a venue where students will be likely to observe others interacting, such as going shopping at the mall, having lunch at the student union, or attending a sporting event.
- B. Individually, have students identify several different stimuli that they would be likely to pay attention to (e.g., clothing, level of physical attractiveness, posture, shoes).
- C. Next, ask students to make connections or associations between the stimuli that they have selected (e.g., dressed very casually in pajama bottoms and a sweatshirt – makes sense when wearing sandals and a baseball cap, slouching in a chair).
- D. From there, have students explain and assign meaning to the stimuli chosen. What does the student believe is the message(s) being sent (or trying to be sent) by the person? (e.g., the person is dressed very comfortably, they probably are pretty laid back and friendly – and probably doesn't have a test or major assignment due today).
- E. How does the present interpretation of the stimuli chosen compare to various instances when the student has observed these stimuli? Were the student's past interpretations "accurate?" (e.g., many college students tend to dress casually, so this is pretty much the norm – although a friend of mine dressed this way because he/she had overslept and didn't get the chance to shower).
- F. Once students have completed this task individually, have them compare their answers with another person. Did any individuals select/attend to the same stimuli – yet differ in how they organized, interpreted, or retrieved this information? Are there any universal stimuli out there for individuals to attend/select, organize, interpret, and retrieve? Yes/No? Why?

2.2 This activity is offered as a way for students to comprehend their beliefs associated with gender roles. The chapter identifies four different gender roles in communication: androgynous, masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated.

- A. In small groups, have students identify characteristics or descriptors for
 1. Males who would fit into each of the four gender roles, and
 2. Females who would fit into each of the four gender roles.

** If possible, create small groups with at least one all-male group, one all-female group, and one mixed sex group. In this way, it will be possible to assess if same-sex groups have different perceptions about gender roles (especially for their own sex) then mixed-sex groups do.

- B. Compare the results generated from the groups. What similarities emerge between the groups when characterizing males and females into gender roles? What differences, if any, emerged?
- C. How might gender role socialization influence descriptions for males and females?
- D. Which gender roles tend to be portrayed with the greatest frequency on television and the movies? How does that influence society's perceptions towards these gender roles?

2.3 This activity is created to help students understand how self-fulfilling prophecies are created and shaped by the interactions we have with others.

- A. On a sheet of paper, have students anonymously generate one positive and one negative example of a self-fulfilling prophecy that they have experienced prior to taking this class.

** Encourage students to use pencil or blue or black ink when generating their examples to help ensure that there is no desire to link any person to his/her answer.

- B. Collect these sheets of paper and share some of the answers with the class.
- C. What messages are likely to facilitate the development of a positive self-fulfilling prophecy?
- D. What messages are likely to facilitate the development of a negative self-fulfilling prophecy?
- E. What can people do to accept the positive messages?
- F. What can people do to reject the negative messages?
- G. Which is harder to do – accept the positive messages or reject the negative messages? Why?

2.4 This activity is offered to assist students to better understand the concept of “face.”

- A. Have students break into small groups and, using the textbook as their guide, discuss a time in which for each group members face was an issue.
- B. Have the groups determine whether each incident illustrates positive face or negative face.

Questions for discussion:

1. How did each group determine what situations were matters involving face?
2. How did the groups determine whether each incident illustrated positive or negative face?
3. How can this exploration of face in the lives of group members teach us how the concept of face may impact our perceptions of face in the future?

Interactive Activities

These are Internet exercises that enrich and reinforce chapter content taking learning beyond the printed page. Found in every chapter, these activities can be easily accessed through the Book Companion Website via the text specific Online Resource Center.

2.1 Optical Illusions and Perception

<http://www.scientificpsychic.com/graphics/index.html>

How is it that two people can look at the same thing and interpret them differently? Sometimes what we see—or what we think we see—is different from reality. That's why optical illusions and visual perception of pictures and objects can be fun to explore. Check out this site, [ScientificPsychic.com](http://www.scientificpsychic.com), for several examples of visual illusions. Consider how sight can affect our perception of objects, events, or other people.

2.2 Perception Filters

<http://webhome.idirect.com/~kehamilt/ipsyperc.html>

In her Psychology of Human Relations course, Professor Karen Hamilton provides a thorough handout summarizing theories of perception, the perception process, and influences of perception. Read her handout at the website Perception and the Self, and note the Individual's Unique Perceptual Filter diagram. Notice that our filters fall somewhere between reality and appearance.

1. How do each of the items listed under the filter column of the diagram affect our perception? Can you think of an example from your experience?

2. Write out your thoughts on each of these "filters" and compare them with the thoughts of a classmate.

2.3 Pygmalion in the Classroom

http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_sc/assignment1/1968rosenjacob.html

Probably the most famous study of self-fulfilling prophecy was conducted by Harvard professor Robert Rosenthal and elementary school principal Leonore Jacobson. Their study examined teacher expectation and student achievement. Read the article "Rosenthal and Jacobson Publish *Pygmalion in the Classroom*" at the History of Education website, then answer the following questions:

1. What do you think about the teachers' perceptions of their students in the classroom?

2. Do you believe accurate or inaccurate perceptions can affect student performance?

3. What would happen if a teacher had a negative opinion of a student? Do you think it could actually harm a student's future success?

4. Can you think of any positive or negative messages sent to you by an influential person at a young age? Funny how these things stay with us, isn't it?

InfoTrac College Edition Activities

These exercises and activities found throughout the text make use of the Infotrac College Edition, the online library which is a dynamic database which allows students to further their research on interpersonal communication and find a wealth of articles of interest. Access these exercises easily on the Book Companion Website via the text-specific Online Resource Center.

2.1: Attending to What Is Important

“Bet You Can’t Remember How to Tie the Bows on Your Life Jackets” by Jeremy Bullmore

Marketing, 5 August 1999

Marketing and advertising experts know that we often receive many more messages than we can possibly decode. The article “Bet You Can’t Remember How to Tie the Bows on Your Life Jackets” by Jeremy Bullmore uses the concept of selective perception to explain that if something is important to us or we have a need for the information, we will pay more attention to

it. In particular, he discusses airplane safety videos to explore the concept of the attending and selecting stages of the perception process.

1. What do you think about his proposed study of airplane passengers?
2. For the next class period, think of some sort of message that we see or hear regularly but rarely attend to and select.
3. Share your thoughts with the class.

2.2: Cultural Perceptions and the Glass Ceiling

“Asian-Americans Face Great Wall; Perceptions, Cultural Traditions Hinder Advancement to Top Corporate Ranks” by Valerie Block

Crain's New York Business, 3 November 2003

The cultural perceptions of others can make it difficult for people outside the mainstream American culture to get ahead in the business world. This is especially true if a person's cultural heritage is perceived as being at odds with what Americans perceive as the typical business person. Read the article “Asian-Americans Face Great Wall; Perceptions, Cultural Traditions Hinder Advancement to Top Corporate Ranks” by Valerie Block and then complete the following activity:

1. With a partner, describe what you consider to be a successful business person.
2. Are any of the descriptors you use related to gender, culture, or communication style?

2.3: Sex, Gender, and Perception about Communication

“Exploring the Impact of Gender Role Self-Perception on Communication Style”

Women's Studies in Communication, Fall 1999

Very few would argue that men and women differ in the way they interact with others, but is this difference a biological trait or perception of interaction? Read the article “Exploring the Impact of Gender Role Self-Perception on Communication Style” and then complete the following activity:

1. Go to the student center at your school and observe two women, or a group of women, interacting. What do you notice about their communication? Are you close enough to determine their topic of conversation? What is the purpose of the communication?
2. Now observe two men, or a group of men, interacting. Answer the same questions.
3. Did you perceive any differences? What were they?

2.4: Positive and Negative First Impressions

“Quality Interpersonal Communication—Perception and Reality” by Michael B. Coyle *Manage*, July 1993

The article “Quality Interpersonal Communication—Perception and Reality” by Michael B. Coyle discusses perception and the self and applies this concept to communicating in an organization.

Coyle has a creative insight as he discusses self-talk and its influence on perception. In the article he states, “positive views of and feelings about one another are difficult to develop but easy to lose; on the other hand, negative views of and feelings about one another are easy to develop and hard to lose.”

1. With a partner or in groups of three, discuss this insight. What is your response to Coyle's idea?
2. Together, can you recall a situation in which you had a difficult time making a positive impression?
3. How about when someone else did not make a good initial impression on you and you held on to this impression?
4. As a group, share your thoughts with the class.

2.5: The Self and the Workplace

“Quality Interpersonal Communication—Managing Self-Concept” by Michael B. Coyle *Manage*, October 1993

In the workplace, how does your self-concept influence your performance and the performance of those around you? The article “Quality Interpersonal Communication—Managing Self-Concept” by Michael B. Coyle discusses the importance of self-concept in the workplace.

1. As you read the article, think back to messages sent to you by influential people in your life.
2. Identify a positive message sent to you from a “powerful other.” How did it affect you?
3. Now identify a negative message sent to you from a powerful other. How did that affect you?
4. We are also powerful others for people in our lives. Consider how your past experiences with people who were powerful in your eyes could influence your interactions with people who think of you as a powerful other.

Ethics and Choice

This boxed feature found in every chapter, raises thought-provoking ethical questions that encourage students to consider the ethical implications inherent in everyday encounters. Accompanying online activities are featured on the Book Companion Website, allowing students to choose possible responses to various dilemmas and instantly see what consequences their choice brings about.

Students can access the Understanding Interpersonal Website through the Online Resource Center. They can look under Student Resources and click on the “Ethics and Code” menu at left. The interactive version of this scenario allows them to choose an appropriate response.

After living in an abusive home nearly all her life, Karena Paulsen was looking forward to her marriage to Nick Corsetti. The two had dated for over two years and felt comfortable with each other and each other's values. Yet, Karena's feelings of self-worth became compromised one day as she and Nick discussed having a family. Karena wanted to wait a few years and try to get her footing at her new job. Nick wanted to have children immediately.

As the two discussed the issue, it became apparent that Karena's past would come into play. Nick told her that the reason that she wanted to postpone a family had everything to do with her childhood. He reasoned that she had never worked out her “childhood demons,” which she feared would prevent her from really loving her own children. Karena denied such an allegation, trying to explain to Nick her anxiety about discussing her past with him again.

The low-key conversation eventually turned into a shouting match. Karena accused Nick of resurrecting an old issue, and Nick responded by telling Karena that as long as she avoided going to counseling, she couldn't really move on with the subject. He felt that she needed to get

in touch with who she was, and that her relationship with her father was significant in how Karena perceived herself.

Karena's and Nick's conflict underscores how important perceptions of the self are in interpersonal relationships. First, comment on whether or not Nick should push Karena to talk about her background with him again. Second, what ethical system of communication should be followed in this example (categorical imperative, utilitarianism, ethic of care, golden mean, significant choice)?

Possible answer: "Push" is the key word in this dilemma. Nick is correct in encouraging Karena to discuss her childhood issues with a counselor. As her future husband and possibly the mother of his future children, he has the right to make these suggestions. However, Nick should avoid pushing Karena. Rather, he should approach this issue with caution and concern as he attempts to encourage her to speak with a qualified professional.

Although all of the ethical systems discussed in your textbook could be applied to this case, the most effective systems, based on the severity of this issue, would be **categorical imperative** and **utilitarianism**.

Categorical imperative

According to this system, the best thing for Nick would be to continue encouraging Karena to deal with her past and seek counseling. Although Karena might be angry and resistant at first, eventually counseling will be the best alternative for her.

Utilitarianism

Although it would be easier and less stressful for Nick to let Karena deal with her childhood issues on her own, according to the utilitarianism system, a hands-off approach could result in future problems and consequences. In this case, Nick might point out to Karena that this issue not only affects her, but also affects him and their future together as husband and wife and as potential parents.

Ethic of care

If the ethic of care system is applied, Nick would reinforce for Karena that he is there for her, regardless of how or when she chooses to deal with childhood issues. He might offer to accompany her to counseling and assist her through this process as needed. In this case, their relationship is more important than the past.

Golden mean

Here again, the word "push" is key. Karena and Nick should attempt to maintain the conversation about children and Karena's past in a caring and low-key manner, avoiding a shouting match. Nick should allow Karena to discuss her childhood at her own pace, disclosing information as she is comfortable. In addition, if they agree that Karena will go to counseling, she should go only when she is ready for this step. Pushing her into counseling is not a characteristic of this system.

Significant choice

According to the significant choice system, Nick would provide Karena with all the options she has in this case, and he would be supportive. However, he would step back and let her know that the decision to seek counseling and deal with her childhood issues would be her choice.

Your Turn

Assign students *Your Turn* activities. These activities encourage students to think about the text's material in a personal way by asking them to ponder a particular topic and write about it in a journal. These entries are excellent outlets for students to share their perceptions, reactions, and communication choices in a way that is personal, reflective and informative. The *Your Turn* journal activities are also included in the accompanying Online Resource Center.

Think about the time when your self-concept was affected by your communication with another person. What were the circumstances of the communication? How did your dialogue influence your self-concept? Were your self-awareness and your self-esteem both affected? Use examples to describe and explain your experiences.

Case In Point

These textual scenarios can be brought to life on the Online Resource Center. These scenarios include an interactive critical thinking and analysis section that students can complete and email to you. Students can also compare their responses to the suggested responses of the authors. Access the Online Resource Center and ask students to watch the video on Dr. Gomez. Students can email you their answers to the following questions

As he approached the third-floor waiting room late in the evening, Dr. Gomez felt butterflies in his stomach. He was used to giving bad news to families, but he was especially troubled about telling Elise and Barry Camara that their baby girl was going to die soon. All he could think about was what it would be like to be told similar news about his 4-year-old daughter, Isabella. Entering the waiting room, he saw a fragile mother and father sitting on the arms of overstuffed chairs. He could tell by looking at their red eyes that the two had been crying. Dreading the inevitable communication, the doctor took a deep breath and asked the parents to enter the private conference room. This was a scene that the physician had been through before with other families. Yet, talking to Elise and Barry seemed to be particularly difficult. In the room, holding the mother's hand, he related the terrible news. He listened as the parents talked together. He watched them hold each other and cry in each other's arms. As Barry Camara turned to shake Dr. Gomez hand, the doctor returned the tender shake. He immediately sensed the couple needed time alone.

Dr. Gomez left the conference room and looked down at his hands; they were trembling. He thought about his Isabella. He also thought about his other patients who were near death and how he handled giving this type of news to their families. As he walked into the physicians' lounge, Roberto Gomez kept hoping that the couple could see how terrible he felt. He didn't want to be viewed as a cold-hearted medical professional. He wished that the Camaras could see him as a compassionate person who was trying to overcome some of his own personal grief about the situation. Doctors are usually viewed, he thought, simply as messengers. They communicate something good or bad to a patient and then go along their way. He lay down, closed his eyes, and thought about his precious daughter and how lucky he was to have a healthy toddler.

Questions

1. Look again at our chapter opening. Discuss your reaction to the perceptual and self-concept dilemma presented to Dr. Gomez. Do you believe the physician spoke to the family appropriately? Why or why not?

2. Discuss how Dr. Gomez used the process of organizing in his conversation with the Camara family.
3. Discuss how Dr. Gomez used the process of interpreting in his conversation with the Camara family.
4. Discuss how identity management functioned in the interaction between Dr. Gomez and the Camara family.
5. How does “face” relate to the interaction between Dr. Gomez and Elise and Barry Camara?

Chapter Questions

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. The _____ stage of the perception process involves assigning meaning to stimuli.
 - A. attending and selecting
 - B. organizing
 - C. Interpreting
 - D. retrieving

ANS: C

2. Our understanding of who we are is known as:
 - A. self-concept.
 - B. self-awareness.
 - C. self-esteem.
 - D. self-monitoring.

ANS: B

3. When we assume that because Jack is smart and handsome that he must also be kind, then we have participated in the _____.
 - A. implicit personality theory
 - B. self-fulfilling prophecy
 - C. attribution theory
 - D. symbolic interactionism

ANS: A

4. Which of the following terms refers to the extent that a person actively thinks about and controls their public behaviors and actions?
 - A. self-monitoring
 - B. positive halo-effect
 - C. relational uppers
 - D. self-esteem

ANS: A

5. Which of the following strategies will help improve your self-concept?
- A. set reasonable goals
 - B. decide what you'd like to change
 - C. have the desire and will to change
 - D. all of these choices

ANS: D

6. When we have an expectation about our future behavior that is likely to come true because we believe it and act in ways to make it come true, we are engaging in
- A. relational schemata.
 - B. social interactionism.
 - C. self-monitoring.
 - D. self-fulfilling prophecy.

ANS: D

7. According to the textbook, androgynous people are
- A. feminine males.
 - B. masculine females.
 - C. those with neither feminine nor masculine traits.
 - D. those with both feminine and masculine traits.

ANS: D

True/False Questions

1. The organizing stage of perception involves categorizing stimuli to make sense to them.
True
2. Stereotypes are a fixed impression of groups.
True
3. Gender refers to the biological make-up of an individual.
False
4. Self-awareness and mindfulness are the two components involved in self-concept.
False
5. Your personal frame for viewing life and life's events is called your worldview.

True

6. The idea that our communication with others shapes our personal identity is called social interactionism.

True

7. Inferences are like meta-facts, where we know facts about facts.

False

Communication Assessment Test (CAT)

Found within each chapter the CATs allow students to examine their interpersonal communication skills by completion and self-assessment of their attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. The activities allow students to measure communication apprehension, self-monitoring and more. These assessments help students evaluate their communication skills and take personal responsibility for their own skill development.

Self-Monitoring Scale

Directions: The statements below concern your personal reactions to a number of different situations. No two statements are exactly alike, so consider each statement carefully before answering. If a statement is *true* or *mostly true* as applied to you, place a T next to the question. If a statement is *false* or *mostly false* as applied to you, place an F next to the question. You can also take this test online under Student Resources for Chapter 2 at the Understanding Interpersonal Communication Online Resource Center.

- _____ 1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of people.
- _____ 2. My behavior is usually an expression of my true inner feelings, attitudes, and beliefs.
- _____ 3. At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.
- _____ 4. I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.
- _____ 5. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.
- _____ 6. I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people.
- _____ 7. When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues.
- _____ 8. I would probably make a good actor.
- _____ 9. I rarely seek the advice of my friends to choose movies, books, or music.
- _____ 10. I sometimes appear to others to be experiencing deeper emotions than I actually am.
- _____ 11. I laugh more when I watch a comedy with others than when alone.
- _____ 12. In groups of people, I am rarely the center of attention.
- _____ 13. In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.
- _____ 14. I am not particularly good at making other people like me.
- _____ 15. Even if I am not enjoying myself, I often pretend to be having a good time.
- _____ 16. I'm not always the person I appear to be.
- _____ 17. I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone else or win their favor.
- _____ 18. I have considered being an entertainer.
- _____ 19. In order to get along and be liked, I tend to be what people expect me to be rather than anything else.
- _____ 20. I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.
- _____ 21. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.
- _____ 22. At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going.
- _____ 23. I feel a bit awkward in company and do not show up quite well as well as I should.
- _____ 24. I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).
- _____ 25. I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.

Scoring: Give yourself one point for each of the following questions *if marked F*:

1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 12, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23

Give yourself one point for each of the following questions *if marked T*:

5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 24, 25

Add up the points. A score between 0 and 12 indicates that you are relatively low in your self-monitoring. A score between 13 and 25 indicates that you are relatively high in your self-monitoring.