Nonverbal Communication

All forms of communication except words. It includes sounds, body language, and environmental factors.

Functions of Nonverbal Communication

1. Relates to verbal communication - it often accompanies a person’s words.
   a. Reinforces a verbal message.
   b. Contradicts verbal messages.
   c. Acts as a substitute for a verbal message.

2. Conveys emotional and relationship dimensions of a message.

Characteristics of Nonverbal Communication

1. Subconscious - nonverbal communication is most often sent on this level. We are often not aware of the messages we send nonverbally. We also process, interpret & respond on this level.

2. Contextual - it depends on the situation in which it occurs.

3. Ambiguous - this means that nonverbal messages are open to interpretation and are often confusing.

4. Cultural - A nonverbal message commonly used in one culture may send a completely different message in another culture.

Characteristics of a Positive Professional Image

1. Confidence - Having a strong voice with an attentive and positive attitude shows that you believe in yourself and your communication skills.

2. Poise - Comes from an understanding of communication situations and a strong sense of what is appropriate and correct. It sends out the message that you are in control of your communication and the situation you are in.

3. Assertiveness - Suggests a strong sense of purpose. It means you are confident in yourself, your opinions and beliefs and are not afraid to take a stand when necessary.

4. Immediacy - Being perceived as approachable, friendly and open. It is giving another your full attention.
Types of Nonverbal Communication

1. **Voice** - Human sound that is used to transmit language to others. It has many characteristics:
   - **Pitch** - the highness or lowness in the sound of a voice.
   - **Inflection** - stressing or placing emphasis on certain words or phrases.
   - **Volume** - Level of loudness or softness in a person’s voice.
   - **Tone** - A specific vocal quality.
   - **Rate** - How fast or slowly a person speaks.
   - **Pause** - brief period without sound. Helps provoke thought, develop curiosity or suspense, create a dramatic effect or raise questions.
   - **Silence** - longer period of suspended sound. It communicates a willingness to listen. It expresses approval, disapproval, apathy. It also shows courtesy, respect, or profound emotion.
   - **Laughter** - conveys humor, friendliness, acceptance and good feelings. It can also convey cruelty or sarcasm.
   - **Vocalizations** - sounds without words. Sighs, whines, throat clearing are examples. They send messages about a sender’s feelings.

2. **Body Talk** - Visual messages we send with our physical presence. It has several factors:
   - **Personal Appearance** - has a great impact on communication because of first impressions.
     - **Dress** - Your attire can add or detract from the image you want to project in social and professional contexts.
     - **Grooming** - It shows others whether or not you take pride in your appearance. It also implies that you want to look and be your best.
   - **Kinesics** - refers to the use of the body in communication.
     - **Posture** - Makes your clothes fit better, but gives you the air of confidence, poise and immediacy.
     - **Muscular tone/tension** - Shows your comfort level in situations.
   - **Movement and Gestures** - should be controlled with purpose.
     - **Movement** - the way you walk or move from one place to another.
**Gestures** - a movement of any part of the body that reinforces another message or acts as a substitute for speech. They are very cultural in nature.

Facial communication - one of the most noticeable and important aspects of nonverbal communication. It can display a wider range of emotions more accurately and immediately than any other form of body talk.

**Eye communication** - People use eyes to make contact with others, maintain and regulate interaction, and to provide space or distance.

Making **direct** eye contact often will be viewed as a sign of honesty and credibility.

3. **Environmental cues** - The way you use space, distance, and territoriality communicates messages about you and your relationships.

   **Spatial** Communication - Your perception and use of space.

   **Intimate** distance - up to 18 inches from your body. Communication in this range tends to be very personal.

   **Personal** distance - 18 inches to 4 feet. Typically people allow friends, family members, and some coworkers to enter their personal space comfortably.

   **Social** distance - four to twelve feet. The most appropriate distance for interpersonal and small group interactions in professional and social contexts.

   **Public** distance - 12-25 feet. Used in formal presentations.

   **Territory** - People may identify a space or territory, claim it, and protect it as their own. Your space can send a variety of messages about you.

   **Touch** - In recent years, rules and norms have taken a definite shift toward “Don’t touch.” Touching can be considered harassment and intimidation and can cause serious emotional and legal issues.

   **Time** communication - How you manage your time is crucial.

   How you use time sends strong message about your perceptions of others, your relationships with them and your attitude about responsibilities.

   **Artifacts** - articles of adornment you use to decorate yourself or your surroundings.

   **Objects** - all the materials you keep in your space or take with you.

   **Color** - Associates a certain meaning or feeling.

   **Fragrance/Odor** - The sense of smell is believed to provide the most direct link to the emotion center of the brain.