**Types of Nonverbal Communication**

**Interpersonal Communication**

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Keeping the **5 characteristics** of nonverbal communication in mind, let’s look at the **5 types** of this form of speaking:

1. **Body orientation**
2. **Posture**
3. **Gestures**
4. **Face and eyes**
5. **Voice**

**Body orientation:** the degree to which we face forward or away from someone with our body, feet and head.

Activity: Choose two partners. Two of you are in a conversation and are close friends when a third person wants to join you: signal to the third person that you do not want them to join you but you don’t want to be rude by asking them to leave. You have to show them with your body orientation that you want them to leave; you can use words, but not to ask them to leave (double messages!).

Next time you are in a crowded space, try to observe who is being included/excluded solely from the body orientation of those around.

**Posture:** Look around the room: what can you tell about your classmates from their posture? We have a lot of sayings in our culture and language that convey the importance of this:

*I won’t take this lying down.*

*Take a load off.*

*He can stand on his own two feet.*

*She has to carry a heavy burden.*

Engaged teachers know when their lecture is not getting across! Psychologists show that we can tell how others feel, whether tense or relaxed, and how this reveals a person’s status: a lower status person will be more rigid and tense; for example, an employee will sit upright while the boss leans back in the chair. Double messages are at work here, too: at a party, you might see someone laughing and talking, but their posture shouts nervousness. On a more serious note, rapists have revealed that they have used postural cues to determine who they can intimidate: easy targets are more likely to walk slowly and tentatively, stare at the ground, and move their arms in short, jerky motions.

**Read:** *The Look of a Victim* page 248.

**Gestures:** These fall under the category of **emblems and illustrators** (from characteristics of nonverbal). Sometimes these are intentional: cheery wave, thumbs up. Other times, it is not the case: *preening behaviours:* stroking or combing hair, glancing in the mirror, rearranging clothing. Also, *fidgeting* is a form of ambiguous communication. All of these behaviours are called **manipulators:** social rules discourage us from performing most manipulators in public, but people still do so without noticing. Increased use of manipulators is often a sign of discomfort. Also, too few of these **gestures** can indicate **double messages.** However, a relaxed person will also show less of them, therefore these messages are highly nuanced and can take careful observation in order to interpret.

**Face and Eyes:** These are the most noticed parts of the body, but are very complicated!

1. It’s hard to describe the number and kind of expressions- seems limitless!
2. The speed with which they change makes it difficult to understand sometimes. Hint: look for ways in which the expressions seem overdone. This can indicate hiding something. Also, look at a person when they are not thinking about their appearance: ie. Looking around at a crowd watching something.
3. Eyes: meeting eyes usually means interest in involvement, whereas looking away signals a desire to avoid contact.
4. Eyes communicate positive or negative attitude, dominance and submission, and the pupils can show interest. When looking at a picture of the opposite sex, generally, pupils dilate; more so for women than men! Greater for women looking at a picture of a mother and child.

**Voice:** While it is easy to mistake voice for verbal communication, remember verbal involves actual words; the tone of voice communicates many relational messages. **Paralanguage** describes nonverbal, vocal messages.

With a partner say the following sentence over and over again, but emphasizes a different word each time. How many messages did you perceive?

*This* is a fantastic book. This is a *fantastic* book. This is a fantastic *book*. This *is* a fantastic book.

**Disfluencies:** stammering, such as “uh” “ummm” “er”….

As with body language and perceiving which language is being spoken without the volume, researchers found that participants could recognise which emotion was being conveyed, regardless of which words were being used. In fact, listeners pay more attention to paralanguage than they do words. Also, communicators are more likely to comply with requests delivered by speakers whose rate is similar to their own: fast talkers comply with fast talkers, slow with slow.

**These are 5 of the most easily recognizable means of communicating nonverbally. However, it is important to note the following also communicate:**

1. **Touch:** signals a variety of relationships; shapes how we respond to others; essential to our healthy environment; governed by social and cultural rules.

**Ie:** dentist/haircut; handshakes; clap on back; kisses; aggression.

Babies used to die in orphanages in the 1800s at a rate of almost 100% because they were not held! Premature babies grow faster and put on more weight if they are massaged; mood improved for depressed adolescents; immune systems for cancer and HIV patients is improved. It is socially accepted more for women than for men.

**Babies and water:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0MoXxkHKjs**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0MoXxkHKjs)

1. **Attractiveness:** affects interactions: ie. More dates, higher grades, shorter court sentences, higher rates of social descriptors such as kindness, sociable and strong.
2. **Clothing:** special clothing is linked to persuasiveness ie. Fake uniforms; women in jackets seen as more powerful; as we grow older, its importance shrinks.

**Obedience and uniforms:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16QMQXIjYVU**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16QMQXIjYVU)

**Buzzfeed:** [**http://www.buzzfeed.com/jazminontiveros/these-men-tried-on-a-police-uniform-and-things-got-intense#.wo7aE3mN4**](http://www.buzzfeed.com/jazminontiveros/these-men-tried-on-a-police-uniform-and-things-got-intense%23.wo7aE3mN4)

1. **Proxemics:** the way people use space: exercise on page 264. **Intimidate distance**: those who we are close to; **personal distance**: wide range, from 75cm to 1.2m and changes as the conversation progresses; **social distance**: more business-like; **public distance**: farthest zone, ie. Teachers in the classroom.
2. **Territoriality:** Whereas personal space comes with us, territory stays in one place. We think of our home, our bedrooms, our parking space as ours, even when we are not there. Says a great deal about our status.
3. **Physical environment:** our physical settings, architecture, and interior design affect our communication.
4. **Time:** the way we handle time can express both intentional and unintentional messages.