

Social Anxiety, Shyness, Communication and Relationships

Modeling, Social Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, Social Skills,
Compassion, Empathy and more

Empathy, Social/Emotional Intelligence, Communication

- Communication is both verbal and non-verbal
- Social Intelligence is about knowledge of self and others and includes communication skills, compassion (potentially) and empathy. Other definitions exist about awareness of others and self, social change
- Emotional Intelligence - **Emotional intelligence (EI)** is most often defined as the ability to perceive, use, understand, manage, and handle emotions. People with high emotional intelligence can recognize their own and those of others, use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior, discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, and adjust emotions to adapt to environments. From Wikipedia

Some Related Terms

- Empathy – seeing or observing things from a different point of view than your own. An actor or actress playing a part doesn't show how they would respond to a situation but how the character they are playing would respond.
- Sympathy – feeling with a person
- Compassion – sensitivity to distress or suffering within oneself or others and a desire to do something about it.

Some Related Terms, Ideas

- Modeling as used in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) says we can learn to adopt the behavior, thoughts, beliefs, mindset of someone skilled, competent or etc. to create a similar experience in ourselves.
- Social intelligence is sometimes equated with “common sense,” but some people who claim to have common sense would not be judged to have social intelligence, empathy, compassion or communication skills.
- Body language – includes tone of voice, timber, pitch, speed of speech, posture, movement of body in relation to other.

Resources and Information

- Terms to look up for more information: small talk, “how to talk to anyone,” relationships, body language, non-verbal communication
- “The Like Switch: An Ex-FBI Agent's Guide to Influencing, Attracting, and Winning People Over” By: Jack Schafer PhD , Ph.D. Marvin Karlins Ph.D.
- “Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships” by Daniel Goleman
- “Emotional Intelligence” by Daniel Goleman

Overcoming Shyness & Social Anxiety

- This may help with loneliness but that is a philosophical issue.
- Having social skills, emotional and social intelligence doesn't guarantee good interactions or not experiencing anger, stress, frustration, and anxiety when interacting with others.
- Thoughts affect behaviors and emotions; emotions affect behaviors and thoughts; behaviors (actions) affect behaviors and emotions.
- Beliefs are at the core of these negative or positive thoughts and feelings.

Body Language Cues to liking

- Smiling
- Eye contact (eye contact with smiling) – variations based on nature of the relationship
- Head tilting is a sign of safety and liking
- Nodding while a person is speaking or saying, “uh huh,” “right,” “okay”
- Postures – leaning inward is liking, removing items between two people = liking; defensive or disinterested – arms crossed, also sitting back
- Looking away and turning the body away from the person is a negative signal
- Pursed lips signals disagreement

Vocal aspects of how we communicate

- Speed of speech – talking fast conveys anxiety, stress, being overwhelmed.
- Changes in tone of speech can convey emotional response, empathy
- It's not just what you say but how you say it that matters
- Cognitive dissonance occurs when content of what is being communicated doesn't match body language, tone of voice
- E.g., I often find myself mirroring the body language of the other person and found myself smiling back at someone who was describing something disturbing.

Small Talk Tips – Getting a Conversation started

- Match the other person's mood before speaking – is the appropriate response to offer facts or to respond to the other person's feelings/mood (e.g., tired).
- Say anything to get things started – anything other than complaining, being rude, or unpleasant when making a first impression.
- Comment on the weather, the current situation
- Ask a person how they spend their day (days), weekends, versus “what do you do?”

More conversation starters

- Wear or bring something that makes others curious enough to ask, “what is that?”
- Ask someone what it is that they have or are wearing; compliment someone on something they are wearing and maybe ask a question about it.
- Ask a third party for information about a person to have a conversation starter.

Active Listening Techniques

- Paraphrase: Explain what you believe has been said in your own words.
- Clarify: Ensure you understand what has been said through asking questions.
- Summarize: *Offer* a concise overview of what you believe the main points and intent of the message received are.
- Try to move away from thinking about your response while the other person is speaking – this is different than listening.

Active Listening Cont. & Mirroring

- Reflect the emotions in a tentative fashion? “So, you were feeling frustrated?”
- Summarize, clarify, paraphrase words and mood and ask, “did I understand that right?” “Am I understanding correctly?”
- Mirror a person’s vocal pattern and/or posture and changes in posture.

Active Listening – Thinking Like a Therapist

- Ask what is that like – sometimes people cannot label their emotions or understand exactly what they are feeling. How is this person experiencing this event is what we want to understand.
- Validate the experience of the other person. Find something that we can agree with about the other person's perspective. Different than approving of everything.
- Understand a person's ambivalence. Part of them wants to change something or act a certain way and another part wants to do something different.
- Empathy is like an actor playing a part – we don't want to think about how we would feel if something happened, but we want to understand the other person's perspective.

Generalizations – Potential Problems

- Ask questions – never just assume
- We are all diverse and again we are members of different cultural groups
- Overgeneralization is a Cognitive Distortion as described in the book “Feeling Good” by David Burns which I recommended.
- Remember that the fact that we are affected by cognitive distortions doesn’t mean that we are irrational, delusional or can’t think logically – the fact that we do fall prey to cognitive distortions doesn’t mean that we are “crazy”

Cognitive Distortion: Overgeneralization

- Overgeneralization leads to a fear of rejection.
- We ask someone to go out and they decline, and we tell ourselves “no girl would ever go out with me.”
- We don’t get a job offer after one or two interviews and say that “no one will ever hire me.”
- Reality: there are many reasons why someone else might have been chosen for the job. Not every woman or man has the same interests, tastes, preferences, likes and dislikes.
- The reality statements are examples of challenges to the automatic thought.

Projection and Overgeneralization

- Imagine you had a very invalidating experience; or you were criticized, judged or embarrassed.
- First ask questions – does the other person ever act like your point of view is valid? Are you respected for having a different point of view?
- Projection occurs when after a bad experience we imagine that we will be treated the same way by others.
- We start thinking “I am not good enough because of ...” my job, income, appearance, etc.