

Interpersonal Relationships

Week 4 notes

Self-presentation & self-disclosure

Flirtation

- Verbal and non-verbal communication of interest in another person
- Relationships are almost impossible
- Rules = there are no rules
- Purpose → sex, relationship or for fun

Non-verbal Flirtation

- Most people flirt using subtle cues
- Gaze, body posture, facial expressions, touch, grooming gestures
- These cues are ambiguous = multiple interpretations
- Allows both parties to save face in case there is no interest

Flirtation by Men vs Women

→ Women

- Use gaze, touch, facial expressions, and grooming gestures
- Disinterested women: stop flirtatious non-verbal behaviours early in interaction

→ Men

- Primarily rely on touch
- Disinterested men: slower at stopping non-verbal flirtation

Sexy Cad vs Good Dad study

→ Cantu et al 2013

- Same male actors played sexy-cad and good-dad roles for the counterbalancing of conditions
- Sexy-cad → made statements and mannerisms that showed charisma, confidence, and social dominance (seen as unreliable and undependable)
- Good-dad → came across as reliable, caring, fam oriented, wanting a committed relationship

Self-Presentation

- Goal is to elicit liking from the other person
- People try to present themselves in the best light possible
- Tendency to focus on some facts and less on others

6 Tactics of Self-Presentation

→ **Leary 1995**

1. **Self-descriptions:** describing oneself in ways that communicate a desired impression
2. **Attitude expressions:** expressing attitudes to convey the presence or absence of certain characteristics
3. **Attributional statements:** explaining past and present behaviour in ways that elicit a desired image
4. **Compliance with social norms:** acting in ways that are consistent with the prevailing norms of the situation
5. **Social associations:** expressing associations with desirable others and dis-associations with undesirable others
6. **Changes in physical environment:** using and modifying aspects of one's physical environment to elicit a desired impression

Attitude Expressions

- Similarity is crucial for close relationships
- Ppl tend to reveal this info during the “getting to know” stage

Attributional Statements

- Usually self-serving
- Put positive spin on negative behaviours, focus only on positive and avoid discussing negative aspects of personality, attitudes, etc.

Compliance w Social Norms

- Being well groomed can indicate that the person has good taste, is serious
- Follow other norms
- Ex: when told a sad story we react sympathetically; when told a funny one, we laugh

Social Associations

- Being associated w someone famous, popular can make us look good
- Name dropping, wearing a jersey

Physical Environment

- Where you live can say a lot about you
- How you present your environment can reveal things about you
- Ex: statues and expensive paintings can give the sense of high social standing

Self-Presentation Norms

- **Decorum:** referring to behaviours that conform to established standards of behaviour

- **Modesty:** usually constrains how boastful we are... too much modesty can be interpreted negatively
- **Behavioural matching:** matching the other person's self-presentation
- **Consistency:** if you contradict yourself from day to day, you will be perceived as weak, unreliable and unpredictable

Revealing Unwanted Info

- During initial stages of getting to know someone, people reveal damaging info that they did not want to reveal

Deceit

- People face a paradox; they want to present themselves in the best light, but the other person is doing the same
- Sometimes info presented is not truthful
- Rely on non-verbal cues to tell if person is lying
- Pitch of voice tends to rise and more sentence repair

Self-disclosure

- Successful relationships move from self-presentation and self-enhancing communication to self-verifying ones, which is accomplished through self-disclosures
- = thoughts, feelings, and experiences that we reveal to others
- It can backfire and the person will withdraw
- Misconception is that revealing our values will allow others to see into our souls and how deep we are

Individual Differences in Self-Disclosure

- Genders differ in their self-disclosures
- Women → more willing to disclose feelings of depression, anxiety, anger and fears and sometimes avoid self-disclosure to avoid getting hurt
- Men → avoid self-disclosure to maintain control over relationships

Social Penetration Theory

- Self-disclosure can be looked at in terms of its breadth of topics and depth of topics

→ Issues

- Predicts that all relationships will have linear increase in self-disclosures over time before levelling off
- No 2 relationships develop at the same rate

Exceptions

- People who claim they experienced love at first sight, tend to self-disclose very rapidly
- They also tend to have longer lasting relationships
- Unclear if longevity of relationship is due to self-disclosure or something else

Aspects of Self-Disclosure

- **Descriptive intimacy:** disclosing factual info about self to form an impression
- **Evaluative intimacy:** expressing emotions and judgements
- **Topical reciprocity:** staying on topic you are conveying that you are responsive - leads to attraction

Topical Reciprocity Model

- Self-disclosure reciprocity
- Involves a tit-for-tat exchange of info, typically matched on intimacy and valence

Capitalization

: Sharing of positive events with partner

- Builds personal and interpersonal resources that go beyond the experience itself
- Tested relationship between type of response and intimacy among partners

Self-Monitoring

: degree to which you monitor your behaviour in social context

- **High self monitors:** social chameleons, adapt to behaviour of the social situation
- **Low self monitors:** rarely change their behaviour in different social situations, are guided by their true beliefs and attitudes

→ Contradictory findings

- Found that high self monitors were more prone to disclose high levels of intimate info and low self monitors followed the reciprocity norm

Self-consciousness

- 2 types of self-consciousnesses
- 1. Private → being aware of your own attitudes, feelings, motives, and values
- 2. Public → focussing on self-as-a-social-object that impacts others
- Our consciousness can affect amounts of self-disclosure in social situations

Anxiety

- Anxious people disclose less regardless of the social situation
- Due to self protection and self perception processes
- Fear of rejection

Trust & Manipulation

- People have to have some trust in people to whom they disclose information
- Some people use disclosed info to manipulate others or to control the relationship

Context Influences on Self-Disclosure

- Inability to self-disclose to the opposite sex is related to loneliness in both genders
- Lack of self-disclosure to same-sex friends is associated with loneliness in women

Proximity

- Self disclosure in friendships does not serve the purpose of getting to know one-another
- Seems to be used for social support and coping
- Psychological closeness is behind this type of disclosure
- **Psychological closeness:** disclose intimate info
- **Physical closeness:** disclose non-intimate info

Self-Disclosure in Mature Relationships

- Decrease of self-disclosure over time
- Self-disclosure is learning about your partner but in mature relationships not much else to learn