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## PARTICULARITIES OF COMMUNICATION IN COUPLES: THEORETICAL SYNTHESSES

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In recent years, in the context of socio-cultural changes, including the increase in the divorce rate, the changes occurring in the dimension of gender roles and the increase in the importance of personal independence in couples, it is essential to focus on understanding how communication can influence these relationships. Couple relationships have become more complex, and expectations towards the partner have increased. Effective communication between partners is considered one of the most important predictors of relationship longevity and can decrease the risk of separation.

**Keywords:** *couple, family, relationship, communication, types of communication, variety of delivery methods, dysfunctional relationships.*

### PARTICULARITĂȚILE COMUNICĂRII ÎN CUPLU: SINTEZE TEORETICE

În ultimii ani, în contextul schimbărilor socio-culturale, inclusiv a creșterii ratei divorțurilor, a schimbărilor intervenite în dimensiunea rolurilor de gen și a creșterii importanței independenței personale în cupluri, este esențial să ne concentrăm pe înțelegerea modului în care comunicarea poate influența aceste relații. Relațiile de cuplu au devenit mai complexe, iar așteptările față de partener au crescut. Comunicarea eficientă între parteneri este considerată unul dintre cei mai importanți predictori ai longevității relației și poate scădea riscul de separare.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *cuplu, familie, relație, comunicare, tipuri de comunicare, varietatea metodelor de livrare, relații disfuncționale.*

#### Introduction

In the field of psychology, especially in the psychology of couple and family relationships, communication is both a given and a fundamental condition for subjective and intersubjective (interrelation) existence. Communication is a human activity that is present in all aspects of family life. We know that in the process of communication, various conscious and unconscious contents are transmitted, belonging to the protagonists involved in the act of communication. For this reason, it is important to analyze the different types, functions, and stakes of communication from the perspective of the theories that have established them [5, p. 143].

If love is the heartbeat of relationship, communication is its lifeblood. Many research studies of family strengths found communication to be a common thread in keeping family relationships strong and viable. A relationship will be made or broken to the degree a couple learns and practices effective communication skills. Poor communication is the surest sign of unhappiness in marriage and the greatest predictor of marital trouble. Regular expression of appreciation and affection is characteristic of healthy, quality marriages [1, p. 266].

#### Types of communication

According to the theories and paradigms of communication (formal, transactional, relational-systemic, phenomenological, and praxiological), the following types of communication can be found in any type of relationship:

- **Defensive communication:** reproach, defense, attack.
- **Passive communication:** lack of involvement, truncated message (sabotage).
- **Active communication:** message clarity; this type of communication involves possessing communication strategies and skills, as well as the use of verbal and non-verbal communication codes.
- **Assertive communication:** clarity of message and information [5, p. 145].

### The stakes of communication

As an interactional process that involves intersubjective and thus interrelation exchange between two people (partners in a couple), they are the main actors who can interpret communication similarly or differently. For this reason, it is important to identify the subjective and intersubjective stakes of communication. From a general to a specific perspective, Alex Mucchielli classifies the possible stakes of communication as follows:

- **Informational Stake:** providing information.
- **Positioning Stake:** positioning oneself in relation to the partner (role).
- **Mobilization Stake:** influencing the partner (as a resource).
- **Relational Stake:** the moment of interaction determines the nature of the relationship – a regressive or growth-oriented relationship.
- **Normative Stake:** establishing a system of cohabitation rules [9, p. 75-88].

### Communication in the couple and family context

In conclusion, communication is carried out by two or more actors in a given situation, and the analysis of communication must always be related to the context and the actors involved. The situation reflects various aspects related to psychological mechanisms such as identification, projection, etc., which influence how information is managed by those involved to achieve certain goals or stakes.

In the context of couple relationships and family groups, communication also relies on a system of internal representations influenced by family members, which shape specific models of introjected communication and interaction. The introjection of parental or familial relationship models generates a set of expectations and interaction patterns with adaptive or maladaptive tendencies. [11, p. 190].

### Levels of communication in couples

From the perspective of the levels at which communication occurs in a couple's relationship, the following modes are identified:

- Cognitive communication.
- Emotional-affective communication.
- Intimate-erotic communication.
- Gestural communication (body language).
- Intellectual communication.
- Spiritual communication.

A psychoanalytic perspective on the levels of communication in couples is provided by Alberto Eiguer (2006), who identifies three levels:

1. **Imaginary level:** projections and introjections, the first stage of falling in love.
2. **Symbolic level:** meanings and significance.
3. **Real level:** behavior in the couple and dynamics, which, along with the other two levels, constitute the space of the couple [3, p.90].

Communication is the process by which one person receives messages from another. It is the sharing of messages, ideas, attitudes, and feelings resulting in a degree of understanding between a sender and a receiver. Various avenues of communication, both verbal and nonverbal, come into play. The ability to express oneself as clearly as possible is very important, but perhaps more critical to the communication process is the ability to listen effectively. Learning a few principles and practicing some of the skills in these three areas can help prevent some of the communication breakdowns common in marriage. Avenues of Communication. Whether or not it is realized, communication is going on all the time. A person can speak volumes without ever opening his mouth. Conversely, the person who talks a lot may not necessarily be an effective communicator [2, p. 1-6].

*We all communicate by using a variety of delivery methods, including:*

*Verbal delivery* – These are the words used to send a verbal message. Words represent meanings given to objects, thoughts, and feelings. Different people may give different meanings to the same words. Only about 11 percent of the impact of a message is determined by the words used.

*Vocal delivery* – This includes tone of voice, accent given to particular words, intonation, and length and frequency of pause used to deliver a particular verbal message. Approximately 34 percent of a message's impact is determined by vocal delivery.

*Facial Expression* – An old cliché says that a picture is worth a thousand words, and that certainly holds true in communication. The face often reflects the sender's emotions or feelings. The expression can be pleasant, angry, happy or sad, confused, annoyed, demanding, controlling, loving, etc. Regardless of the sender's words, the expression is more likely to reveal the true meaning of the message. A full 55 percent of a message's impact is determined by facial expression.

*Touching* – Appropriate physical contact has the power to convey feelings of warmth and love. Within a marriage, gentle touches, holding hands, kissing, hugging, cuddling, massaging, and sexual intimacy are important ways of communicating tenderness, love, care, and appreciation. *Gesturing* – Hand and arm movements often serve as key methods of delivering a message. Gestures can be emphatic, soothing, rude, powerful, or patronizing. When used along and your partner, enter the picture. If our timing is bad for a particular discussion, or if emotions are so intense as to get in the way, you cannot expect good quality communication. Recognizing emotions, naming them, and sharing them using "I" statements can help enhance your communication.

*Faulty Communication* – When only part of the message comes through, you and your partner can expect something similar to network trouble on your television. Good chance you will come up with the wrong perception at least part of the time. This is where reflection, or paraphrasing, the message back to your partner can be extremely helpful. If you perceived or interpreted the wrong message, reflection will allow your partner to clarify the exact meaning.

*Non-comprehension* – When you and your partner are on different wavelengths, comprehension will be minimal. If you ask how work. Faulty communication occurs went today, and your spouse and posture can send additional non with verbal delivery they can give additional meaning to a message.

*Body Movement* – Things such as scratching, crossing arms or legs, closed-mindedness, will not understand all of what she is trying to tell you; this is non-comprehension. Different wavelengths may occur because of standing and comprehend [8, p. 140-160].

COMMUNICATION answers in computer jargon, you different interests, verbal messages to another person. Such manipulations might be perceived, accurately or not, as nervousness, boredom, disinterest, different ways of looking at things, or different education or expertise in an area. Patience and extra care in expressing yourself clearly can clear the way for better understanding and reduce rudeness.

*Head movement* – Moving the head to indicate agreement or disagreement gives immediate feedback to the other person who then knows where the other stands on the issue [10, p. 52].

### **Areas of Communication Breakdown**

Try as hard as you will, you will not always be able to communicate effectively in your marriage. Accept that fact. Then work at applying the tools and skills just discussed to help minimize communication breakdown.

*Poor Quality Communication* – This is where the sensitivities and emotions of sender and receiver, you when other things get in the way, such as distractions or preoccupations. Trying to discuss something important when your spouse is watching the Super Bowl or reading the newspaper results in incomplete, ineffective communication. Eliminating distractions, setting aside special times for communicating, and being sensitive to the other's needs of the moment will go a long way in eliminating faulty communication.

*Misunderstanding*—When you put your own projections or perceptions into the message your spouse is sending, you tend to evaluate or judge. When the message can be interpreted in more than one way, as most messages can, there is a good chance you will come up with the wrong perception at least part of the time. This is where reflection, or paraphrasing, the message back to your partner can be extremely helpful. If you perceived or interpreted the wrong message, reflection will allow your partner to clarify the exact meaning.

*Non-comprehension* – When you and your partner are on different wavelengths, comprehension will be minimal. If you ask work went today, and your spouse answers in computer jargon, you will not understand

all of what she is trying to tell you; this is non comprehension. Different wavelengths may occur because of different interests, different ways of looking at things, or expertise in an area. Patience and extra care in expressing yourself clearly can clear the way for better understanding and comprehension [7, p. 62].

V. Satir in the book *Conjoint Family Therapy* ask : *What do we mean by „communication”*? Isn't studying how people communicate almost like studying how they walk a cross a room?

a. The word „communicate” is generally understood to refer to nonverbal as well as verbal behavior within a social context. Thus „communication” can mean „interaction” or „transaction.” „Communication” also includes all those symbols and clues used by persons in giving and receiving meaning.

b. Taken in this sense, the communication techniques which people use can be seen as reliable indicators of interpersonal functioning.

c. As an aid to therapy, a study of communication can help close the gap between inference and observation as well communication and symptomatic behavior [12, p.80].

People must communicate clearly if they are going to get the information which they need from others. Without communication we, as humans, would not be able to survive.

a. We need to find out about the world. We learn to differentiate and relate ourselves to objects by learning experience, what we can expect from them.

a. We need to find out about other people and about the nature of relationships.

- What, for example, are the socially approved ways to act, ways expected by others?

- What behavior will please or displace others?

- Why do others respond as they do?

- How do we appear to others? How do others see us, evaluate us, react to as?

b. We receive this vital information in two basic ways:

- We ask for verbal responses.

- We also observe nonverbal behavior [12, p. 81].

Communication, problem solving, positive exchange (expression affection, sexual satisfaction) and the expression of aggression are areas where relational skills are particularly important. These are the four relational dimensions crucial for the stability of the couple.

They can be operationalized in different manifestations of interactions within the couple:

- the exchange of affection between spouses (verbal and non-verbal)

-the exchange of hostilities between spouses (verbal and non-verbal)

- the ability to listen (verbal and non-verbal behaviors)

- support (verbal and non-verbal behaviors)

- conflict resolution (verbal and non-verbal behaviors)

- sexuality (verbal and non-verbal behaviors).

The inappropriate pattern of interaction is formed because it does not exist skills to listen to the other, skills to face difficult situations.

Couples differ not only in the frequency and reasons for disagreements their marriage, but also according to the intensity of the feelings generated by these misunderstandings.

Couples in which the attachment is deep, who are sure of the solidity of their bond, I know different feelings compared to couples in which the mutual attachment is weak and in which the spouses have a tendency to offend each other [4, p. 6].

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the issue of communication within couple relationships is one of the essential aspects to be addressed in psychotherapy. It offers the possibility to decode digital language (the meaning of words), metaphorical messages regarding various types of transactions, and the analog meaning (coded value) of what is expressed. By analyzing the modes, stakes, and functions of communication within couple relationships and the family group, communication becomes a complex system, a special and particular language. It encompasses defining elements such as feelings, beliefs, representations, the unsaid (individual or group secrets), conflicts, life plans, values, ideals of the partners involved directly and indirectly (such as rela-

tives). Thus, communication is a deeper act than it appears at first glance. It goes beyond the declarative discourse of an individual, implying responsibility, knowledge, and respect.

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