Module 01: Communication, Guidance and Counselling

Lesson 01: Design Communication, Guidance and Counselling in a Person- and Situation-oriented Way

Contents

1. Learning Objectives:

At the end of this lesson

- you have basic knowledge of explaining interaction and communication processes in the context of practice.
- you know the general and psychological communication models.
- you can explain the elements and objectives of the Perspective-Taking Model and the Dialogue Model.
- you know the level of communication and can explain them using the Four-Side Model.
- you perceive non- and paraverbal communication content (Iceberg Model) and can interpret it and can use communicative features themselves.
- you can recognize your conversation partner and assess yourself according to the Riemann-Thomann model.
- you know the Situation Model according to Friedemann Schulz von Thun and can explain the basic principles

2. General Communication Models

Types of communication models. There are numerous models for the process of communication. A distinction can be made between so-called general and psychological communication models, with the difference lying in their focus and area of application. Here is a detailed explanation of these two

General communication models provide a comprehensive structure for describing and analysing the communication process. They are not limited to a specific discipline or context and are used to understand the basic principles of communication. Some well-known general communication models are

1. **Shannon-Weaver Model**: This model, also known as the Sender-Receiver Model, was originally developed for technical communication and describes the process of transmitting information from a sender to a receiver through a communication medium. It includes elements such as sender, message, channel, receiver and interference (noise).
2. **Schramm Model**: Wilbur Schramm extended the Shannon-Weaver Model by emphasising the reciprocal nature of communication. He introduced the concept of the "field of shared experience", which describes how important it is for the sender and receiver to have shared experience and knowledge in order to successfully transmit and understand the message.
3. **Berlo's SMCR Model**: This model emphasises four key components of communication: source, message, channel and receiver. It emphasises the importance of the skills and understanding of the sender and receiver and the role of the channels used.

3. Psychological Communication Models

Psychological communication models focus on the psychological aspects and processes that play a role in human communication. These models take into account the inner states, thoughts, emotions and perceptions of the individuals involved. Some examples of psychological communication models are

1. **Transactional Analysis**: This theory, developed by Eric Berne, analyses the interactions between individuals based on the different ego states (parent ego, adult ego, child ego). It helps to understand how past experiences and inner states influence communication and how different interaction patterns emerge.
2. **Four-Sided Model (Friedemann Schulz von Thun)**: This model states that every message has four sides: the factual content, the appeal, the relationship level and the self-revelation aspect. It helps to understand how a message can be interpreted differently depending on which side the recipient pays particular attention to.
3. **Cognitive dissonance (Leon Festinger)**: This theory explains how people strive to maintain consistency between their beliefs and behaviours. Dissonance, which is perceived as an unpleasant state, leads to communication strategies that aim to reduce this dissonance.

The main difference between general and psychological communication models therefore lies in their focus. General communication models offer a structured analysis of the communication process, independent of specific contexts or disciplines. Psychological communication models, on the other hand, focus on the internal, psychological processes and states that influence and shape communication. Both approaches are important to fully understand the complexity of human communication.

4. The Purpose of the Communication Models

General and psychological communication models serve different purposes, each contributing to improving the understanding and effectiveness of communication. The specific purposes of both types of models are listed here as follows:

4.1.   Purposes of the General Communication Models

1. Structuring the communication process:

- They provide a clear structure and help to identify and understand the basic elements and processes of communication.
- Example: The Shannon-Weaver Model helps to explain the transmission process of information from a sender to a receiver.

2. Analysis and diagnosis:

- They make it possible to identify and diagnose communication problems by taking a detailed look at the various components and stages of communication.
- Example: The SMCR Model can be used to analyse communication errors at the respective levels (sender, message, channel, recipient).

3. Optimisation of communication:

- They offer approaches and tools to make communication more effective and efficient.
- Example: The Schramm Model can be used to emphasise the importance of shared experience and knowledge between sender and receiver in order to reduce misunderstandings.

4. Basics for communication technology:

- They form the theoretical basis for the development and improvement of communication technologies.
- Example: The Shannon-Weaver Model was originally developed for technical communication and forms the basis for modern information theory.

An example from nursing training that illustrates the application of a general communication model by the practice supervisor could be the following situation:

A practice instructor notices that a trainee regularly has difficulties in performing a particular nursing technique correctly, e.g. wound care. In order to clarify the situation and solve the problem, the practice instructor uses the Sender-Receiver Model to structure the communication in a targeted manner.

1. **Sender (practice instructor):** The practice instructor conveys a clear and factual message by describing the observation: 'I have noticed that you are having difficulty with wound care and I would like to help you improve this technique.'
2. **Message (content**): The information consists of the observation and the offer of support, with the aim of improving the training situation.
3. **Recipient (trainee):** The trainee takes the message on board and provides feedback. She may express uncertainties or questions, which she finds particularly difficult.
4. **Feedback:** The practical instructor receives feedback and can then adapt the teaching by specifically addressing the uncertainties and offering new explanations or a new demonstration.

In this example, the Communication Model serves to avoid misunderstandings, give clear instructions and improve the learning process through targeted communication.

4.2. Purposes of Psychological Communication Models

1. Understanding of human interaction:

- They help to understand the inner psychological processes and mechanisms that influence communication between people.
- Example: Transactional analysis explains how different ego states (parent ego, adult ego, child ego) influence the way people interact with each other.

2. Promotion of self-reflection and personal development:

- They encourage individuals to reflect on and improve their own communication patterns and the underlying psychological processes.
- Example: Schulz von Thun's Four-Sided Model helps people to recognise which aspects of their messages they particularly emphasise and how these are interpreted by others.

3. Improvement of interpersonal relationships:

- They offer tools and techniques to strengthen interpersonal relationships through better communication.
- Example: By understanding cognitive dissonance, conflicts and misunderstandings in relationships can be reduced by paying attention to consistency between beliefs and behaviours.

4. Therapeutic applications:

- They are used in psychotherapeutic practice to treat communication problems and promote mental health.
- Example: Transactional analysis is used in therapy to identify and change dysfunctional communication patterns.

General communication models are used for the structured analysis, diagnosis and optimisation of the communication process as well as the development of communication technologies. Psychological communication models, on the other hand, focus on understanding the psychological aspects of communication, promote self-reflection and personal development, improve interpersonal relationships and are used in therapy. Both types of models are crucial to understanding and improving the many facets of human communication.

An example from nursing training that illustrates the use of psychological communication models by the practical instructor could be a situation in which a trainee is under stress and reacts emotionally. The practical instructor uses Schulz von Thun's Four-Ear Model to understand the communication in a targeted manner and react appropriately.

Let's imagine that a trainee is informed by her practice supervisor during a stressful working day that she has made a mistake when administering medication. She reacts irritably and says: 'I don't do everything wrong either!' Using the Four-Ear Model, the practice supervisor can understand the different levels of the message:

1. **Factual level:** the trainee talks about the mistake that she did not make. The supervisor could clarify the mistake and explain objectively what went wrong.
2. **Self-disclosure level:** The trainee reveals her insecurity and inner stress without saying it directly. The practice supervisor could recognise this and respond reassuringly: 'I can see that you are under pressure.'
3. **Relationship level:** The irritated reaction indicates that the trainee may feel criticised. The practice supervisor could make it clear that this is not about personal criticism, but about support.
1. **Level of appeal:** The trainee could be indirectly asking for help or recognition. The practice supervisor could take this up and offer to discuss the situation together.

5. Perspective Adoption Models

Perspective-taking models are primarily concerned with the question of how people can put themselves in the other person's shoes and thus better understand each other.

Carl Rogers' Perspective-Taking Model, also known as the Empathy Model, plays a central role in communication and relationship building, especially in helping professions such as nursing.

It is based on the idea that genuine understanding and empathy for the other person are crucial to building a supportive, trusting and nurturing relationship. This model is extremely helpful for practical instructors in nursing, as it forms the basis for effective guidance, training and support for trainees.

Basic principles of the Perspective-Taking Model

Carl Rogers emphasised three central core conditions for successful interpersonal communication:

1. **Empathy**: the ability to empathise with the other person's feelings and thoughts and to understand things from their perspective. In nursing training, this means that the practical instructor not only recognises the trainee's technical errors, but also perceives their emotional state and possible insecurities.
2. **Acceptance**: Rogers emphasises unconditional appreciation, regardless of a person's mistakes or weaknesses. The practice supervisor should not judge the trainees, but show understanding and respect them as learning individuals.
3. **Congruence**: genuineness and authenticity of the practical instructor. It is important that they remain open and honest in their communication, which promotes the development of trust.

6. Dialogue Models

Paul Watzlawick's Dialogue Model is a central component of communication and systems theory, which he developed together with other scientists at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto. Watzlawick emphasised the importance of communication in human interactions and investigated how misunderstandings and communication problems arise and can be avoided. The key elements, objectives and "practical applications" of Paul Watzlawick's Dialogue Model are explained below.

6.1. Key Elements of the Dialogue Model

6.1.1. Metacommunication

Paul Watzlawick's Dialogue Model is based on key concepts such as metacommunication and the five communication axioms. Metacommunication refers to the ability to talk about the communication process itself in order to clarify misunderstandings and improve understanding.

- Example: When two people talk about how they communicate with each other and what they feel, they are engaging in metacommunication.

6.1.2. The Five Pragmatic Axioms of Human Communication According to Paul Watzlawick

Watzlawick formulated five axioms of communication, which are fundamental principles for all types of communication:

1. You cannot <u>NOT</u> communicate!
2. Every communication has a content and relationship aspect.
3. Communication is always cause and effect.
4. Human communication makes use of digital and analogue modalities.
5. Interpersonal communication processes are either symmetrical or complementary.

1. **You cannot <u>NOT</u> communicate**

A single communication is called a message. Messages are sent and received! According to Watzlawick, even if there is no exchange in the sense of a conversation, a message is still associated with it. The first axiom means that even if someone refuses to "communicate" (stubborn silence, not

accepting the offer to talk), communication still takes place. Every action or non-action therefore has a communicative character, as it is interpreted as a message.

2. Every communication has a content and relationship aspect

This axiom implies an essential realisation. We usually assume that communication is essentially about conveying information. This axiom places the relationship aspect "above" the content aspect and thus shows that communication always has something to do with relationship. The content aspect conveys information, while the relationship aspect defines the nature of the relationship between the communication partners.

3. The nature of a relationship is determined by the punctuation of the communication processes on the part of the partners

The nature of a relationship is determined by the punctuation of the communication processes on the part of the partners. Every stimulus is followed by a reaction.

In communication theory, punctuation is not understood as the placement of punctuation marks. Rather, it is intended to show that interpersonal communication is a cycle without beginning and end (action-reaction-counter-reaction, etc.).

The axiom shows that we live in a constructed reality. People construct their reality based on personal, subjective experiences and judgements and then consider these to be "true". This "subjective" reality, which we also consider to be objective, then determines our further actions.

Paul Watzlawick's Model is characterised by dynamics and interactivity in contrast to the relatively static Sender-Receiver Model. In this model, communication is circular. This means that not only the reactions of person B to the words of person A are significant, but also the repercussions that the reaction of B has on A.

Example of a circular conflict scheme

A nursing student is not doing well at his current clinical exposure. The nurse keeps on nagging him and he withdraws in return.
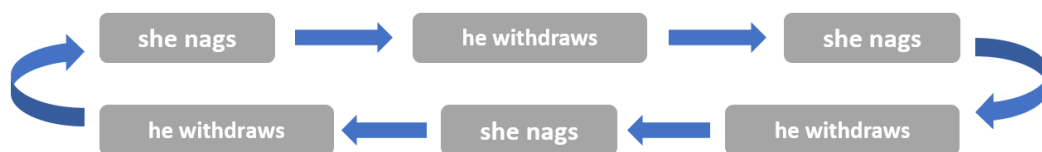
Figure 1: Self-created graphic by Jovan Didier

Both therefore interpret their behaviour as a reaction to the behaviour of the other, they punctuate these sequences of events in such a way that the actions of the other are taken as the cause of their own actions.

If we now excuse or explain our own behaviour with the behaviour of others and, conversely, our conversation partner only sees their behaviour as a consequence of our actions, this can lead to **interaction problems.**

David´s warning: „Katrin does not deliver her contribution.”

David: „Katrin is unreliable.“

Katrin´s warning: „Didn't get a specific task from David”

Katrin: „I only work on what definitely concerns my area.”

Figure 2: Self-created graphic by Jovan Didier

David assumes that Katrin is not completing her part of the project on time due to a lack of motivation. Katrin, however, sees an inaccurate division of labour as the cause of th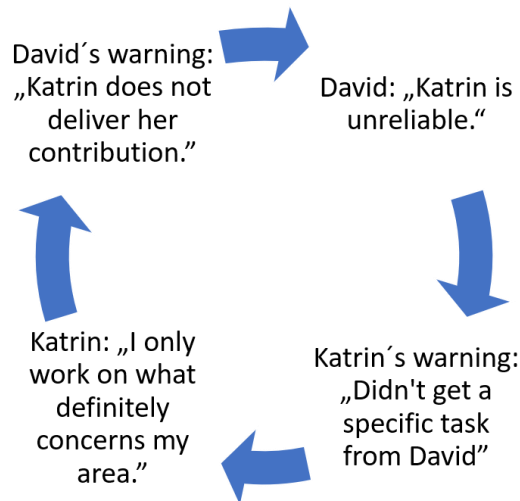e delay. The search for the guilty party ("It's your fault!") leads both of them into a hopeless situation in which, for example, each accuses the other of lacking insight or even malice. Metacommunication (i.e. a dialogue about the respective perceptions) can offer a way out.

4. Human communication uses digital and analogue modalities.

The distinction between the modes is closely related to axiom (2), the content aspect of a communication is usually transmitted digitally, and the relationship aspect is usually transmitted analogue.

Mode - Digital communication.

The content aspect of a communication is usually transmitted digitally and contains data, facts and figures (words).

Mode - Analogue communication.

In addition to speaking to each other, non-verbal aspects such as body language, gestures and facial expressions, posture, manner of speaking (tone of voice) and the entire wider context must also be taken into account.

The non-linguistic analogue elements are the relational semantic (semantics = theory of meaning) aspects and are therefore the supporting elements for relational statements. In analogue communication, the relational aspect of the message is conveyed. The consideration of analogue communication serves to better interpret the content of the linguistic statement. The two forms of representation complement each other and form important aspects and means of expression for communication.

5. Interpersonal communication processes are either symmetrical or complementary

Interpersonal communication processes are either symmetrical (i.e. equal) or complementary (i.e. complementary), depending on whether the relationship between the partners is based on equality or difference.

<u>Symmetrical interaction</u>

- In a symmetrical or mirror-image interaction or communication, the communicating parties are on the same level.
- They try to lower the level of differences between the partners or to bring them to a state of equality.
- In a symmetrical relationship, the communicating parties are therefore on an equal footing or at least try to minimise a difference in rank.
- For example, the dialogue partners speak at the same volume or for the same length.

<u>Example</u>:

- Siblings
- Pupils, students
- Work colleagues
- Team members

<u>Complementary interaction</u>

- In this case, a person assumes a position of power because they bear responsibility in the situation, for example.
- Complementarity does not necessarily mean inferiority or passivity of a part and arises from the fact that the counterpart accepts the role definition.
- Egalitarian interaction is hardly possible.
- In a complementary relationship, the communication partners ideally complement each other in their different hierarchies, which can be found in the classic parent-child relationship, for example.
- This relationship can be expressed, for example, in the fact that one person speaks a lot, loudly or with emphasis, while the other listens mainly in silence.

<u>Example</u>:

- Teacher-Student
- Parent-Child
- Chief-Worker
- Customer-Seller

6.1.3 Communication Disorders

Communication problems often arise due to misunderstandings, contradictory messages (double-bind situations) or incongruent communication (when verbal and non-verbal messages do not match).

- Example: If someone says "I'm fine" but looks sad, this sends an incongruent message.

One weakness of the analogue modality is that it is not unambiguous. A person who smiles may be trying to win sympathy on the one hand, but may also be expressing contempt on the other. Conversely, digital modality lacks a perfect vocabulary for clarifying relationships. It is also easier to pay lip service digitally than to convey it credibly as "true" in analogue.

The analogue elements sometimes reveal a contradiction to what is being said:

- A wild threat with a shy posture;
- An anxious voice in a negotiation;

Figure 3: Image by wayhomestudio on Freepik (30.08.2024)

Revelation of contradictions:

- Agonised laughter in a situation of defeat or in the event of a verbal attack.
- A gesture or an expression tells us more about what another person thinks of us than a hundred words.

Figure 4: Image by cookie studio on Freepik (30.08.2024)

6.2.   Objectives of the Dialogue Model

1. **Improving understanding:**

   By being aware of and applying the axioms of communication, communication partners can develop a better understanding of each other and reduce misunderstandings.

   Example: Through metacommunication, misunderstandings can be recognised and clarified at an early stage.

2. **Promoting the quality of relationships:**

   A clear understanding of the relational aspects of communication can improve the quality of interpersonal relationships.

   Example: When communication partners are aware of the relationship aspects of their communication, they are better able to avoid or resolve conflicts.

3. **Prevention and solution of communication problems:**

   The model offers tools and strategies for avoiding and solving communication problems by clarifying the structure and dynamics of communication.

   Example: Identifying double-bind situations can prevent communication partners from getting caught up in contradictory messages.

6.3.   Practical Application

1. **Reflection on your own communication:**

   Communication partners should regularly reflect on their own communication and that of their dialogue partners in order to identify possible misunderstandings or problems.

   Example: Care teams can improve the way they work together by regularly discussing the way they communicate.

2. **Awareness of non-verbal signals:**

As communication consists of both digital (verbal) and analogue (non-verbal) modalities, it is important to pay attention to body language, facial expressions and tone of voice.

Example: In a conflict discussion between nursing students, it can be helpful to consciously recognise and address non-verbal signals.

3. **Application of the axioms in everyday life:**

The axioms of communication should be consciously applied in everyday life to make communication clearer and more effective.

Example: When a conflict arises, knowledge of the relationship aspect of communication can help to understand and address the emotional background to the conflict.

Paul Watzlawick's Dialogue Model offers valuable insights into the dynamics of human communication. By applying his communication axioms and emphasising metacommunication, communication partners can reduce misunderstandings, improve the quality of their relationships and solve communication problems effectively. It is a useful tool for both personal and professional contexts to better understand and master the complexity and multi-layered nature of human interactions.

7. Levels of Communication

Schulz von Thun's aim was to present the common psychological approaches to communication at the beginning of the 1970s (Carl Rogers, Ruth Cohn, Fritz Pearls, Hilarion Petzold and Paul Watzlawick) in a practical and clear model to illustrate problems and possible solutions for everyday discussions.

The Schulz von Thun Communication Model is particularly popular in practice. One clear advantage is its strong practical relevance and practicability. For example, it is very suitable for critically reviewing your own communication behaviour.

Wherever people meet, they communicate, even if they don't speak. Communicating always means sending and receiving! In interpersonal communication, there is always someone who speaks (the sender) and someone who listens (the receiver).

In every communication, both the transmitted content and the relationship between sender and receiver influence the exchange. This leads to the realisation that communication always takes place on several levels simultaneously.

7.1.   The Four-Sided Model or Communication Square

The Four-Sided Model of communication is based on the assumption that every utterance can be interpreted or understood according to four aspects (sides).
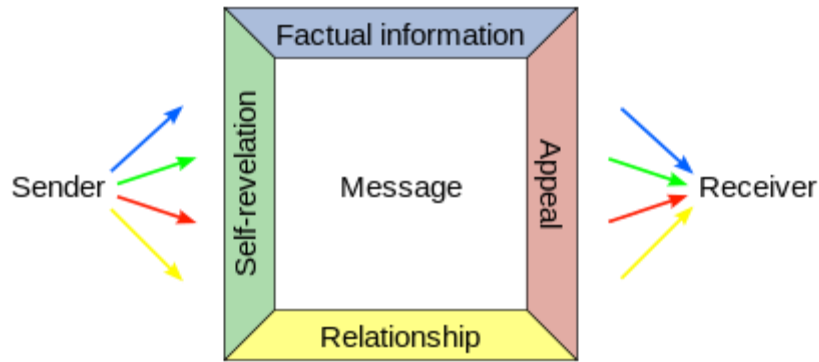
Figure 5: Picture: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four-sides_model

1. Factual level: On the factual side, the speaker provides information about the factual content (blue), i.e. about figures, data and facts. Whether true or untrue; relevant vs. irrelevant; sufficient or insufficient. This level answers the question: "What is being said?".

2. Self-revelation level: Self-revelation (green) comprises what the speaker reveals about him/herself by sending the message (motives, values, self-worth, emotional needs, etc.). The question here is: "What is the sender saying about themselves?".

3. Relationship level: The relationship level (yellow) expresses how the sender feels about the recipient and what they think of them. The message is conveyed through tone of voice, wording, facial expressions and gestures. It answers the question: "How does the sender feel about the receiver?".

4. Appeal Level: What the sender wants the recipient to achieve (wish, advice, appeal or request for action) is represented by the appeal side (red). The question here is: "What does the sender want the recipient to do?".

The Four-Sided Model according to Friedemann Schulz von Thun

How to Prevent Quarrels and Communicate Better with Your Peers. A Tutorial by simpleshow foundation. Min. 3:13, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY9Ofvr2ouw

7.1.1 Explanation of the Communication Levels

Factual level: The factual Level refers to the pure content of the message. For example: "It's 8:00 in the morning." Here the focus is on the information itself, without additional layers of meaning.

Self-revelation level: With every communication, the sender unconsciously or consciously reveals something about themselves. For example, the statement "It's 8.00 a.m." could also mean that the speaker is punctual and values time.

Relationship level: The relationship level concerns the relationship between sender and receiver. It can be conveyed through tone of voice, facial expressions or gestures. For example, "It's 8:00 in the morning" can be neutral information in a friendly tone of voice, while an annoyed tone of voice can express dissatisfaction.

Appeal level: The appeal level expresses what the sender wants from the receiver. For example, this could be an indication that the recipient should hurry when the speaker says: "It's 8:00 in the morning."

7.1.2. Application of the Model

Schulz von Thun's Four-Level Model is often used to analyse and understand communication problems and misunderstandings. As every message has four levels, misunderstandings can easily occur if the sender and receiver emphasise or interpret different levels.

Example:

A nurse says to the student: "The nursing care plan is not yet finished." This could be interpreted at various levels as:

- **Factual level**: The care plan has not yet been finalised.
- **Self-revelation level**: The nurse is stressed or impatient.
- **Relationship level**: The nurse is disappointed with the student.
- **Appeal level**: The student should complete the care plan quickly.

If the employee only hears the factual level, they could simply take the message as information. However, if they perceive the relationship level more strongly, they could feel criticised.

7.1.3. Practical Significance

In practice, the Four-Sided Model helps to realise the multidimensionality of messages and avoid misunderstandings. By actively listening and asking questions, the sender and receiver can ensure that they understand the message on the same level. This promotes clearer and more effective communication and helps to improve interpersonal relationships.

To summarise, Schulz von Thun's Four-Sided Model is a valuable tool for deciphering and improving the complexity of human communication by making visible the different levels on which messages can be interpreted.

7.2.   The "Four Ears Model" of Schulz von Thun

Friedemann Schulz von Thun's Four-Ears Model of communication corresponds to the Four-Sided Model, which explains the complexity of human communication. Like the Four-Sided Model, it states that every message transmitted by a sender contains four different aspects that can be perceived and interpreted by the receiver on four different levels.

Factual Ear
How are the facts to be understood?

Appel Ear
What should I do based on his message?

Self-Revelation Ear
What kind of guy is he?
What about him?

Relationship Ear
How is he talking to me?
Who does he think he's talking to?

Figure 6: The Four Ears Model, picture by Schulz von Thun (translated into English by Jovan Didier)

While the sender speaks with "four beaks", the receiver listens with "four ears". The four sides of the message sent, i.e. what the sender wants to express and/or achieve with an utterance, often do not correspond to the four sides as interpreted by the receiver. This is why the four sides of a message make interpersonal contact exciting, but also tense and susceptible to disruption.

> **Example:**
>
> "If you've listened carefully, you'll know that I've already explained that to you."
>
> - **Factual content**: "If you've listened carefully, you'll know that I've already explained that to you."
> - **Self-revelation**: "I'm angry because the person I'm talking to doesn't listen to me properly and I have to keep repeating myself."
> - **Relationship**: "I can't take the person I'm talking to seriously if they're not even listening attentively."
> - **Appeal**: "Listen better." "Don't always ask when I've already explained."

The relationship is obviously disturbed, the sender has the impression that he and his comments are not receiving the attention they deserve and therefore no longer takes his dialogue partner seriously.

Possible reactions of the dialogue partner:

The dialogue partners have alternatives at their disposal to respond appropriately at the relevant level:

- **Content**: "I'm sorry, but I didn't realise that earlier."
- **Self-revelation**: "You don't need to react so irritably. After all, you want to push through your proposal."
- **Relationship**: "Don't act so arrogant."
- **Appeal**: "I will now listen with more concentration." ... or "You didn't make yourself clear earlier."

The Four-Ears Model is useful in many areas, for example in interpersonal communication, in the work of mediators, therapists and in a professional context. It helps people to become aware of the different levels of their communication and to specifically avoid misunderstandings by communicating more clearly and consciously.

To summarise, Schulz von Thun's Four-Ear Model shows that every message is multi-layered and can be understood on different levels. This understanding can significantly improve the quality of communication and reduce misunderstandings.

7.3.   Communication Disorders

The sender has an idea and wants to communicate it and achieve something with it. But many communication problems lurk between sender and receiver:

- "thought" is not said...
- "said" is not heard...
- "heard" is not understood...
- "understood" is not intentional...
- "wanted" is not skilful...
- "skilfully and intentionally" is not done...
- "done" is not retained...

8. The Iceberg Model

The Iceberg Model of communication is based on the personality models of Sigmund Freud and the communication theory of Paul Watzlawick. It serves to clarify the visible and invisible parts of communication and to show that the majority of communication takes place unconsciously and below the surface.

Freud assumes that we are only aware of around 10 per cent of our personality traits, with the remaining 90 per cent lying dormant in the so-called unconscious.

Paul Watzlawick has applied this model to communication and says that the factual and content-related part of a conversation makes up around 20 per cent and is usually conscious (rational), while the emotional part makes up 80 per cent, is usually not conscious and primarily addresses the relationship level.

Figure 7: Picture by pikisuperstar / Freepik (05.08.2024)

According to Watzlawick's theory applied to communication, the visible area of the content or factual level (rational) corresponds to 20 per cent. This includes the explicitly expressed words, data, facts and arguments. It is the part of communication that can be consciously and directly perceived.

The non-visible area of the relationship level (also known as the emotional level), on the other hand, accounts for 80 per cent. This part comprises the implicit, non-verbal and emotional aspects of communication that are not directly visible but have a strong influence on behaviour and perception.
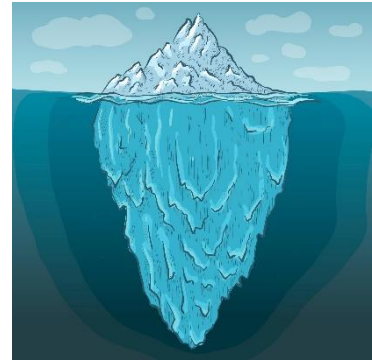
8.1. Meaning of the Levels

The content level (tip of the iceberg) is direct and consciously perceptible. This level contains the conscious, clear and concrete information that is exchanged in a conversation.

> **Example**: In a meeting, the practical instructor states the fact that a drug study must be completed by next Friday.

The relationship level (below the surface), on the other hand, is indirect and often unconscious. This is where the deeper, emotional and psychological aspects of communication are located. These aspects influence how the content is perceived and interpreted.

> **Example**: During the meeting, the practical instructor shows through his/her body language (e.g. folded arms, tense facial features) that he/she is stressed and possibly exerting pressure.
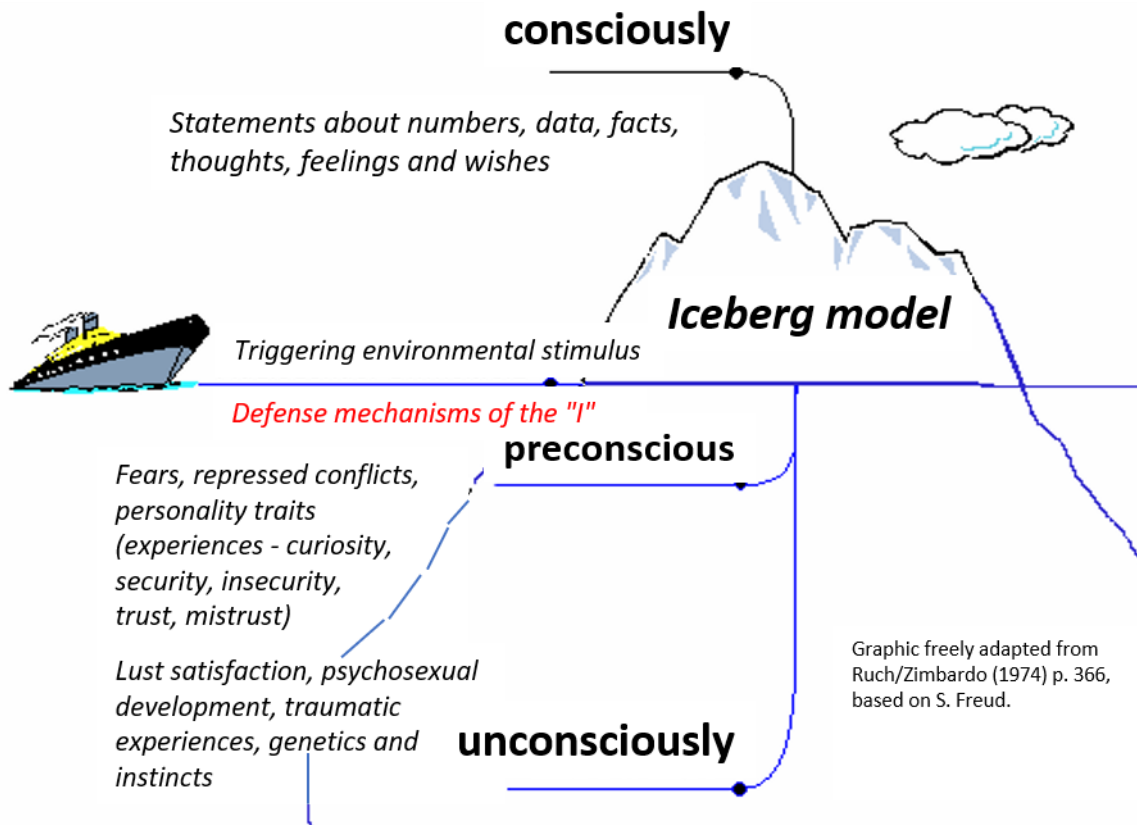
Figure 8: Picture Iceberg Model https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eisbergmodell (translated into English by Jovan Didier)

8.2. Application of the Iceberg Model

The Iceberg Model is particularly useful in analysing communication processes, as it illustrates that much of communication is implicit rather than directly spoken. This has several important implications:

8.2.1. Recognising and Avoiding Misunderstandings

Since most of the communication lies beneath the surface, misunderstandings can easily arise if the invisible part is not taken into account.

Example: A student could perceive an instruction from the practical instructor as criticism, even though the practical instructor only wanted to convey factual information.

8.2.2. Take Emotions and Attitudes into Account

In order to communicate effectively, it is important to understand and take into account the emotional and psychological background of the person you are talking to.

Example: In negotiations, it is important to pay attention not only to the words, but also to the non-verbal signals that give an indication of the other person's real interests and emotions.

8.2.3. Promote Awareness and Reflection

The model promotes self-reflection and sensitisation to one's own unconscious communication patterns and those of others.

Example: A team leader could become aware of their own body language and its effect on the team and actively shape it in order to promote a positive team dynamic.

8.2.4. Develop Constructive Communication

By understanding the Iceberg Model, communication skills can be improved and constructive and empathetic communication can be developed.

Example: A therapist or mediator can use the model to identify and address deeper, underlying conflicts and emotions in conversations.

8.3.   Conclusion

The Iceberg Model of communication shows that the majority of human communication lies beneath the surface and is influenced by unconscious, emotional and non-verbal factors. It emphasises that effective communication is not limited to the exchange of information, but also requires awareness and management of the deeper levels. This understanding can help to reduce misunderstandings, improve relationships and enable deeper, more authentic interaction.

9. The Riemann-Thomann Model

This model is based on research into people's basic fears and desires (cf. Fritz Riemann, 1961). Christoph Thomann placed Riemann's approaches in the context of needs-orientation or basic aspirations and the clarification of interpersonal relationships.

He arranged two opposing needs as opposite poles. The Riemann-Thomann Model attempts to reduce the complexity of personality in order to find easier access to complex topics.

It was clearly described by Thomann as a Relationship Model and not a Personality Model.

In training or consulting, it offers opportunities to address dynamics between two or more people or to illustrate the orientation of teams and organisations.

9.1.   Description of the Basic Orientations

1. **Proximity:**

Characteristic: People with a closeness orientation value harmonious interaction, trust, solidarity, are team players, sociable, accepting, balancing and understanding. They attach great importance to interpersonal relationships and are often very empathetic and cooperative.

Behaviour: They seek contact with others, are communicative and team-orientated. They often avoid conflict in favour of relationship peace.

2. **Distance:**

Characteristic: Distance-orientated people focus on their individuality, can set themselves apart and need their freedom. They want to make rational decisions based on data and facts and act accordingly. Need for autonomy, independence and personal space. People with this orientation attach great importance to individuality and self-determination.

Behaviour: They prefer to work alone or independently, are often analytical and rational. They can appear aloof or unapproachable.

3.   Duration/structure:

Characteristics: People who have a pronounced long-term orientation need clear and familiar structures, routine, order and predictability. They are reliable, work systematically, thoroughly and neatly. People with this orientation attach great importance to order, structure and continuity.

Behaviour: They are reliable, punctual and organised. They avoid change and uncertainty and prefer clear rules and fixed procedures.

4.   Change/change:

Characteristics: Change-orientated people have a need for variety, freshness and spontaneity. They are dynamic, flexible, creative and versatile. People with this orientation attach great importance to innovation, creativity and spontaneity.

Behaviour: They are open to new ideas, flexible and adaptable. They try to avoid routine and boredom and strive for new experiences and challenges.

All four basic orientations occur in different forms in every person. None is "right" or "wrong", there is no such thing as "good" or "bad". All characteristics are of equal value. Every person has resources from every pole, but everyone has a centre of gravity, their home field. How the characteristics are lived or experienced also depends on the context, roles or reactions that are offered or required. In the family, a person can act with a strong focus on closeness, whereas in the professional field, distance-oriented behaviour comes to the fore.
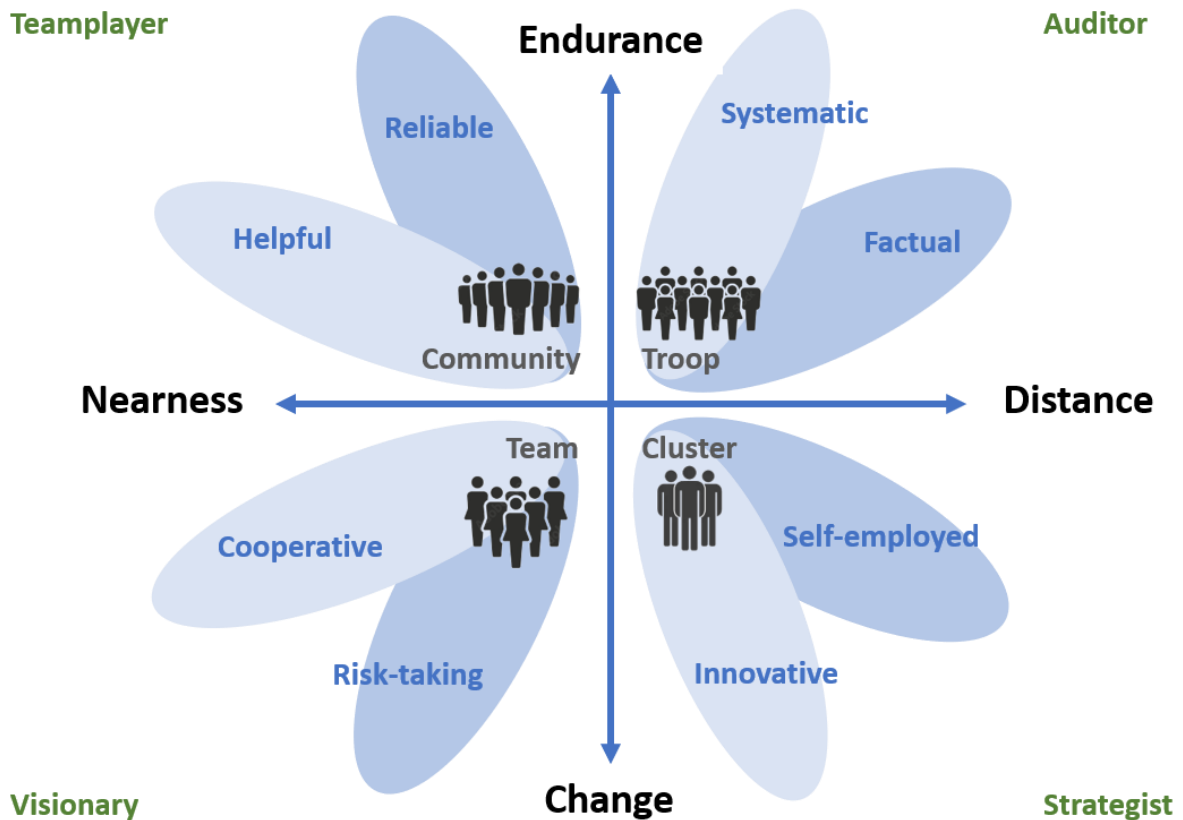
Figure 91: Riemann-Thomann Model, picture from karrierebibel.de/riemann-thomann-modell/ (translated into English by Jovan Didier)

9.2.   Possibilities of the Riemann-Thomann Model

The Riemann-Thomann Model offers a good opportunity to consciously understand when communication is going well - or sometimes not so well. It helps you to recognise the person you are talking to and, more importantly, to know yourself. It helps you to self-reflect on your own leadership personality and enables you to recognise sympathies or antipathies towards employees and colleagues.

Ask yourself to what extent you can be put off by being different or whether you can appreciate the positive values and characteristics and see them as an enrichment.

Knowing yourself and therefore being able to communicate in an appreciative, mindful and constructive way as a partner, friend, boss, trainer ... This presupposes that you are honest with yourself and the other person. The more honest I am with myself, the more harmonious my communication and relationship with the other person will be. By respecting myself, I respect the other person and treat myself and the other person with respect and dignity.

10.   The Vicious Circle Model According to Friedemann Schulz von Thun

The Vicious Circle Model according to Friedemann Schulz von Thun describes a dynamic in which negative communication patterns between two or more people reinforce themselves and lead to escalation. These self-reinforcing spirals are often caused by misunderstandings or unfavourable reactions to the other person's behaviour, which in turn leads to further negative behaviour. The model shows how difficult it can be to break such cycles and how important it is to become aware of the underlying dynamics.

10.1.   Basic Principle of the Vicious Circle Model

A vicious circle usually begins with an unfavourable action or statement by one person, which triggers a negative reaction in the other person. This negative reaction then reinforces the original unfavourable action or statement, which in turn leads to a stronger negative reaction, and so on. This spiral can continue endlessly until either one person deliberately breaks the cycle or the relationship is seriously damaged.
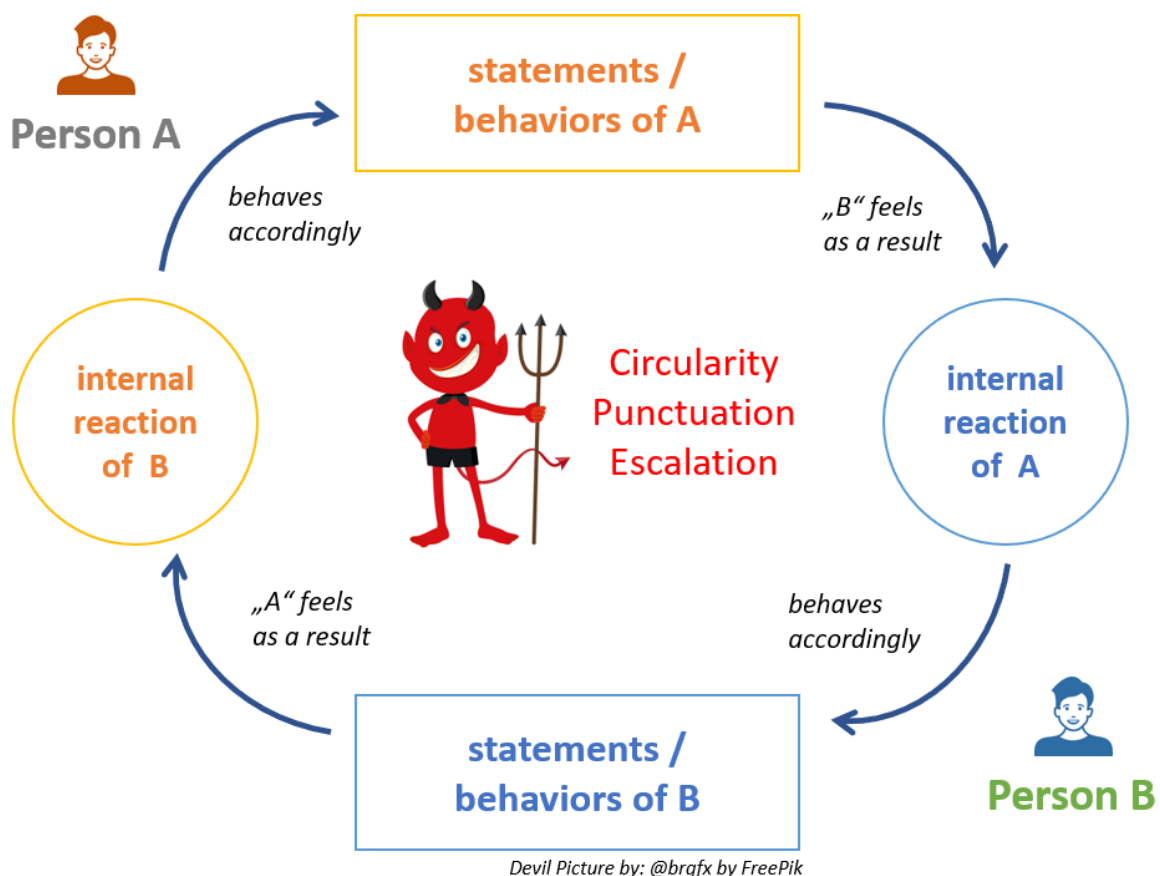

Devil Picture by: @brgfx by FreePik

Figure 10: Self-created graphic by Jovan Didier

Examples of the Vicious Circle Model

Example 1: Partnership

Situation: Anna and Ben are a couple. Anna often feels neglected by Ben because he works a lot and has little time for her.

1. **Starting point:** Anna complains to Ben: "You never have time for me!"
2. **Ben's reaction:** Ben feels attacked and treated unfairly because he believes he works hard to provide for her. He replies, annoyed: "You don't understand how much pressure I'm under at work!"
3. **Anna's reaction:** Anna feels that she is not being taken seriously and gets angry: "You only ever think about yourself! You don't love me!"
4. **Ben's reaction:** Ben feels even more rejected and withdraws emotionally.

The vicious circle: Anna's need for closeness and Ben's need for recognition are in conflict. Both react to the hurtful words and behaviour of the other, causing the conflict to escalate.

Example 2: Workplace

Situation: Nurse Daniel is dissatisfied with the performance of nursing student Maria.

1. **Starting point:** Nurse Daniel expresses his dissatisfaction: "Your patient care is not satisfactory."
2. **Student Maria's reaction:** She feels attacked and unappreciated: "I do my best, but it's hard to stay motivated with these constant points of criticism."
3. **Nurse Daniel's reaction:** Nurse Daniel perceives Maria's comment as an excuse and becomes even more critical: "It's not about excuses, it's about results."
4. **Student Maria's reaction:** Maria becomes defensive and works with even less motivation.

The vicious circle: Nurse Daniel's criticism and Maria's defensive behaviour reinforce each other. Dissatisfaction increases on both sides and leads to a poor working and learning atmosphere.

10.2. Conclusion

Friedemann Schulz von Thun's Vicious Circle Model offers a valuable tool for analysing and improving communication patterns. It shows how easy it is to fall into negative spirals and how important it is to consciously break through them.

If two people cannot find a way out of the difficulties, the Vicious Circle Model can help to recognise the negative dynamics, understand the background and identify pitfalls.

Through self-reflection, empathy and a conscious change in communication, vicious circles can be broken and replaced by positive interaction patterns.

11. The Situation Model According to Friedemann Schulz von Thun

The Situation Model according to Friedemann Schulz von Thun is a concept that takes into account the complexity and context of communication situations. It assumes that communication cannot be viewed in isolation, but must always be understood in the context of the respective situation. The model helps to analyse the many factors that influence a communication situation and thus offers a deeper insight into the dynamics of communication.

11.1. Basic Principle of the Situation Model

The Situation Model distinguishes between different aspects of a communication situation:

1. **The external situation:** The specific framework conditions and the context in which the communication takes place.
2. **The inner situation:** The inner states and feelings of the communication partners.
3. **The relationship aspects:** The way in which the communication partners relate to each other.
4. **The content:** The topic or subject of the communication.
5. **The communication style:** The way in which communication is conducted.

Examples of the "team meeting" Situation Model

1. **External situation:** A weekly nursing team meeting takes place in the office. All team members are present.
   - Factor: The physical environment is formal and everyone involved is prepared to discuss professional issues.
2. **Internal situation**: A nursing team member, Mrs. Fulgar, is stressed because she has not finished a task on time.
   - Factor: Mrs Fulgar's stress can affect her ability to communicate clearly and rationally.
3. **Relationship aspects**: Mr. Santos, another team member, recently had a conflict with Mrs. Fulgar.
   - Factor: The relationship tension between Mr. Santos and Mrs. Fulgar can influence communication within the team.
4. **Content**: The progress of the project and the next steps are discussed.
   - Factor: The content of the meeting requires clarity and precise agreements.
5. **Communication style**: The team leader, Mr. Montes, prefers an open and collegial style.
   - Factor: The open style can help to reduce tensions and promote constructive discussion.

With the help of the Situation Model, the sum of all the circumstances that are contained in the situation, define its centre of gravity and influence the psychological reality of those present is sought to be captured. With this knowledge, it is possible, for example, to handle conversations, meetings and gatherings in a way that is logical to the situation and appropriate to the system.

11.2. Conclusion

The Situation Model according to Friedemann Schulz von Thun offers a comprehensive method for analysing and improving communication processes. By taking into account external and internal situations, relationship aspects, content and communication style, it helps to understand the

complexity of communication situations and to organise them more effectively. This leads to better understanding, fewer misunderstandings and more constructive interactions in different contexts.