**Communication**

Communication is the basis of social activity and it can help shape social reality and experience for all members of society. It can take many forms and utilize many mediums, and it reflects sets of skills that are crucial for a rewarding human experience whether on a personal or professional level.

**Definition:**

Communication can be defined, in the simplest way, as the “transfer of information from one person to another, in a way that is understandable to the receiver”. Based on the above definition, one can identify the key components of communication as follows:

It all begins with an idea or a mental image that originates in the mind of the *Sender* (or Source). That idea is *coded*in words, images, sounds, signs etc, and it formulates a *message,* that message is then communicated through certain *mediums* (verbally, in writing, digital, social media etc) and it reaches the *audience* (one or more people or groups of people), the audience *decodes* the message using their own cultural / historical / political context, personal experience and social background; once decoding is complete the audience elicits a *response* that continues the communication cycle.

There are five (5) main types of Communication:

1. ***Oral communication (interpersonal communication & public communication)***: otherwise called verbal communication, it refers to the communication taking place through speech either in private one-to-one setting, or in small groups (interpersonal) or in settings with a larger audience (public communication).
2. ***Written communication:*** it refers to communication taking place in writing regardless of the medium used. Therefore, even social media posts and electronic communication is still classified under written communication. It can address limited recipients or larger audiences. Essays, news articles, letters, press releases, even notes on the fridge are examples of written communication.
3. ***Nonverbal communication:*** it refers to communication that happens without words (either spoken or written), it includes tone of voice, posture, body language, and many other clues utilized in communication.
4. ***Visual communication:*** it refers to communication taking place through sight primarily and it includes pictures, graphs, visual aids, and all types of visual means of communicating information.
5. ***Reputation:*** it refers to opinions, beliefs or prejudices that people in general have about someone or something, or how much respect or admiration someone or something receives, based on past behaviour, character or gossip.

From the above it becomes evident that although communication is a natural, inherent process, it also has components that can be developed and strengthened through training and practice, while social context needs to be factored into training materials and methodologies to facilitate communication in multicultural environments and complex social and human interactions.

**Theory of Reference:**

There are a lot of theories that attempt to describe and explain the process of communication, from the early 30s into our modern world. Depending on the origins of each theory, it focuses on difference aspects and functions of communication, and although many theories are at odds with each other, they can all contribute to a better understanding of overall processes, functions, and methods of communication. In the context of this project, and its structural characteristics, they theory that will be utilized is *Symbolic Interactionism Theory.*

*Symbolic Interactionism Theory* is based on the early works of Sociologists George Herbert Mead and Max Weber. Herbert Blumer was the academic who named the theory and contributed to its establishment in 1969. According to this theory, human behavior can be attributed to the subjective interpretation of the environment, which contains symbols whose meanings are the result of social interaction (symbols may be words, images, works of art, objects, people and more).

The theory focuses on *meaning, language, and thought.* Under this theory, meaning is not inherent in symbols, but it is constructed through social interaction. Social interaction is, therefore, the primary focus of this theory and interpersonal communication is regarded as the catalyst of human behavior and social function. This emphasis on interaction and interpersonal communication, make this theory a suitable tool in developing and promoting education training models and tools aimed at Youth Workers.

**Set of Communication Skills:**

For the purpose of this project, the following skills have been identified:

* **Conveying messages:** the ability to use the active listen and of being able to focus on the message deliver, decode it appropriately and process the information contained in it and the ability to transfer thoughts, ideas and emotions into a coded message through the use of appropriate language and symbols.

**Observed behaviour:**

* The ability of the individual to focus on messages conveyed in a conversation in a variety of settings.
* The ability of the individual to grasp and process the messages contained in the communication and respond in an appropriate and timely manner.
* The ability of the individual to overcome personal bias and prejudice in order to promote honest and efficient communication in a variety of settings.
* The ability of the individual to express themselves.
* The use of verbal and non-verbal communication in order to show care and interest to the audience.
* The ability to express/understand an open body language through posture, facial expression and gesture.
* The ability of the individual to form coherent and concise messages.
* The ability of the individual to convey thoughts, ideas, emotions through the use of words, translating abstract notions into coherent messages.
* The use of appropriate language based on the social and cultural context.

* **Public Speaking:** the ability to engage larger audiences in a variety of settings.

**Observed behaviour:**

* The ability of the individual to address larger audiences in a professional level.
* The use of appropriate tools and methods from the individual to make the audience get involved publicly.
* The ability of the individual to engage and interact effectively with a larger audience in a public setting.
* **Debate & Conflict resolution:** the ability to express objections, questions, and opposing opinions in a constructive way that ultimately leads to efficient conflict resolution.

**Observed behaviour:**

* The ability of the individual to communicate with different opinions, questions and objections in a meaningful, non-threatening way, within an appropriate cultural and environmental framework.
* The ability of the individual is to give and receive constructive criticism, address conflict in a respectful manner and ultimately resolve conflicts within one-to-one or public settings.
* The ability of the individual to give and receive feedback
* **Body language:** the use of proper posture, gestures, tone, and overall body elements in order to emphasize, convey or effectively communicate messages to a variety of audiences in a culturally appropriate way.

**Observed behaviour:**

* The ability of the individual to familiarize with the different elements of body language and effectively utilize them to promote the delivery of messages.
* The ability of the individual to familiarize with cultural and contextual differences.
* The use of appropriate body language techniques for various settings.
* **Image making:** the ability to use tools such as clothing and appearance, and digital tools in order to facilitate the effective communication of information and/or messages.

**Observed behaviour:**

* The use of external appearance tools in order to promote message delivery for different audiences in a culturally appropriate way.
* The use of information and digital content in order to promote message delivery for different audiences in a culturally appropriate way.
* The ability of the individual to develop, to integrate and re-elaborate digital content in creative way.
* The ability of the individual to collaborate, to interact and to share through digital content.
* The use of image making for personal marketing.

* **Visual aids** (graphs, charts, maps, screen-based media etc): the ability to use visual and digital representations of information effectively in order to promote or validate messages for a variety of audiences.

**Observed behaviour:**

* The use of different visual aids and software in order to present information in an appealing and convincing way to a variety of audiences.
* The ability of the individual to emphasize on the right sources.
* The use of appropriate or creative logos and symbols to deliver the message and to create stimulus to the audience.

* **Reputation:** it refers to opinions, beliefs or prejudices that people in general have about someone or something, or how much respect or admiration someone or something receives, based on past behaviour, character or gossip.

**Observed behaviour:**

* The ability of the individual to promote himself/herself about his/her character, history or behaviour in positive way.