



ASSOCIATION OF
CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS

MODULE 06

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Communication

RESTRICTED



PERSONAL SAFETY MANUAL

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COMMUNICATION

Introduction

It is often said that communication is a two-way process that relates to verbal interaction (speaking and listening), observational interaction (watching and being observed) and individual perceptions (interpretation) of what is seen and heard.

Tactical communication is defined as the use of communication skills with the purpose of achieving control.

In policing terms the goal is always to control situations.

These skills are therefore some of the most important ones that an officer can possess.

This section addresses the key principles of effective communication and how these can be utilised to prevent a conflict situation arising, diffuse conflict and control situations.



Communication Model

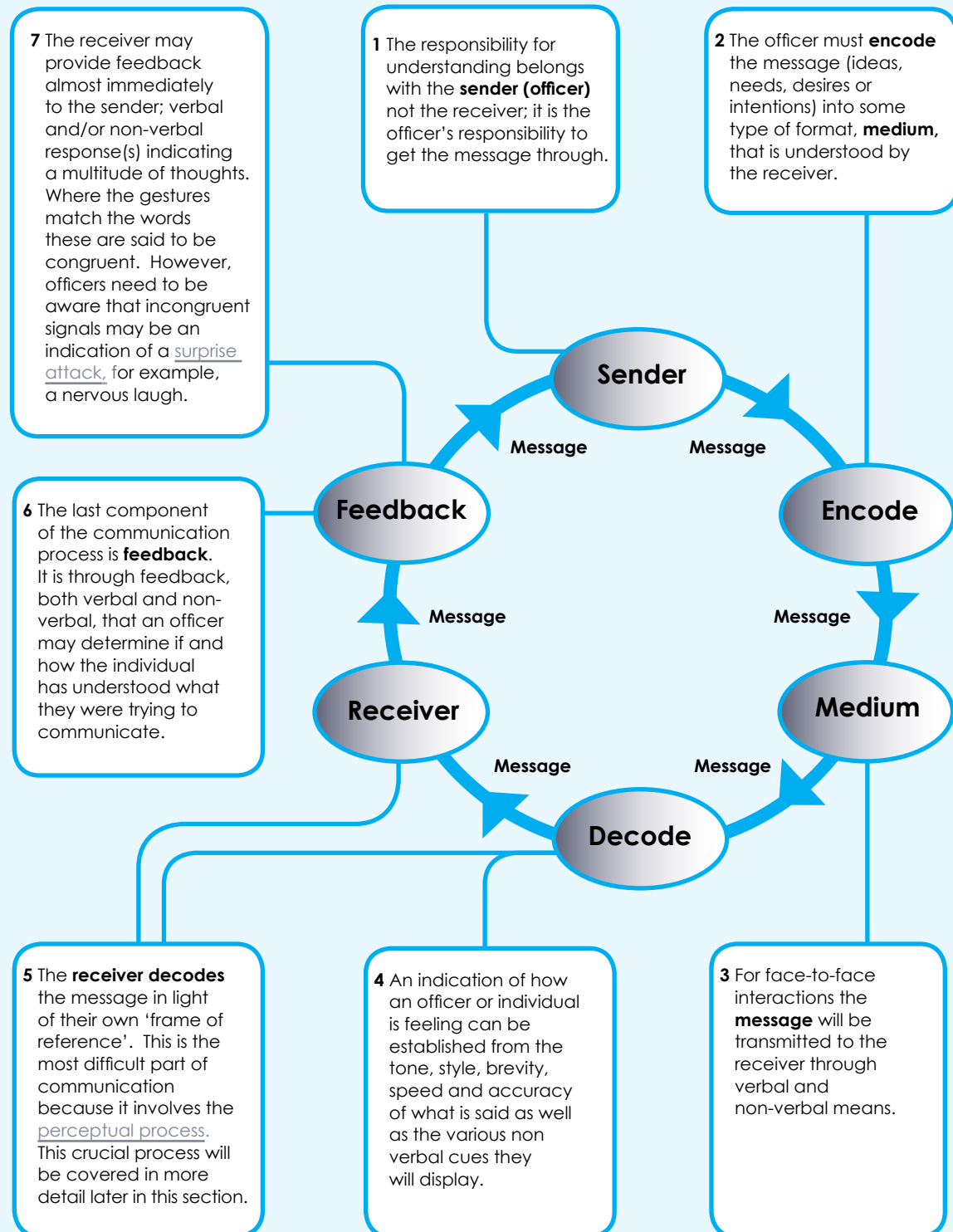
This model, developed from the original work of **Shannon and Weaver in 1949**, contains the key elements of all communications.

In all communications there is a sender, a receiver and a message. This simple model helps to

identify the component parts of communication however communication is a complex, inter-active process which relies on the active participation of both sender and receiver. These complexities will be explored further in this section.

i INFO POINT

Since not all of our interaction may be face-to-face, the medium of radio, telephone, text or e-mail message must also be considered. In these cases the ability to see and therefore obtain the visual element of the 'message' is not present.



Channels of Communication

Inter-personal communication of a message is broadly achieved in two ways, verbally and non-verbally. Much research has been conducted on the percentage contribution of each in a normal encounter.

Words

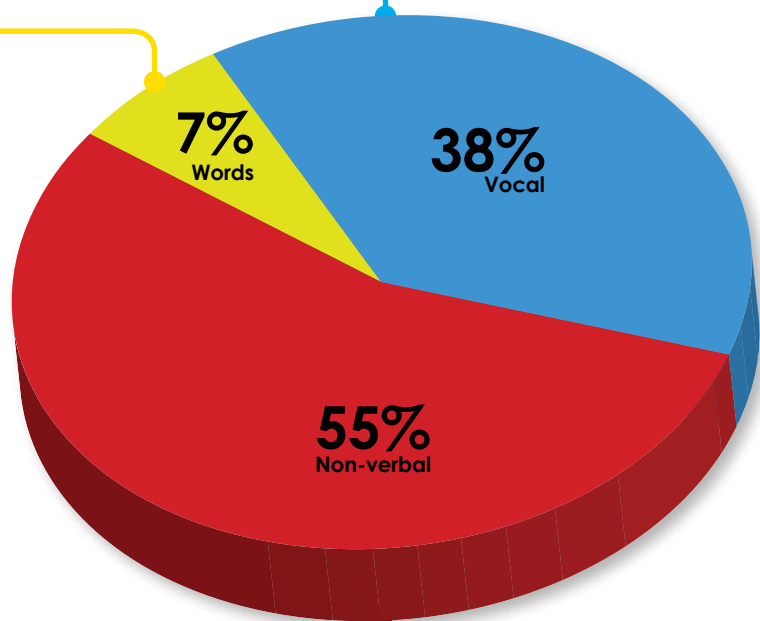
The words make up only about 7% of the message.

Verbal

This can be split further into the **words** and the **vocal** elements.

Vocal (Para-linguistics)

Aspects such as tone, volume, intonation, inflection, spacers, accent, dialect, pitch and pace with which words are spoken make up approximately 38% of the message.



These percentages were derived from research conducted by Albert Mehrabian in the 1960's.

Please note that these and other percentages regarding the relative importance of verbal and nonverbal messages were derived from experiments dealing with communications of feelings and attitudes, i.e. likes and dislikes.

The limitations of this research are acknowledged however it is widely regarded that non-verbal communications (NVCs) still play the major role in communications.

This demonstrates quite clearly that words themselves only make up a relatively small part of the overall message and that non-verbal communications play a major part.

It is therefore vitally important that officers recognise and react to non-verbal cues appropriately.

Given the importance of non-verbal communications, if during an encounter there appears to be a conflict between the individual's spoken word and their body language, the officer may believe the body language until proved otherwise.

Non-verbal (Body language)

Position, posture, stance, body movement, distance, gestures, eye-contact, facial expressions, clothing and adornments make up the remaining 55% of the message.

This can aid officers to predict an individual's actions and possibly increase reaction time. This disparity between the verbal and non-verbal communication is referred to as 'non-verbal leakage'. For example, where a subject is saying yes but is shaking their head. [See Danger Cues](#)

Officers should also be aware of the non-verbal signals they are transmitting to others.

i INFO POINT

Warning: It is important that officers are aware that non-verbal communications can be misread. This is explained in more detail later in this section.

The Perceptual Process

No person sees things exactly the same way as another; each has a unique set of experiences, a unique perceptual 'filter', through which he or she compares and interprets messages. When communicating, each receiver uses that filter to

give meaning to or make sense out of the experience. Making up this filter, or frame of reference, is the unique blend of education, upbringing, and all of the life experiences of the perceiver. Even in the case of twins, the perceptual filter will vary between them.

The filtering process,

affecting both encoding and decoding, can be divided into the following areas:

Knowledge

Knowledge is the expertise and skills acquired by an individual through various ways of learning, both practically and theoretically.

It is therefore important for an officer to realise they must communicate in a manner that the subject is likely to understand.

Attitudes

Attitudes are important in that they come from within and are demonstrated by our actions.

In a confrontational environment it is important to understand how an individual's attitudes will affect their actions.

Feelings

Feelings are, in this context, considered to be a state of emotional perception, such as feelings of joy, sorrow or anger.

These states of emotional perception can enhance or detract from our ability to communicate.

Values

Values are the ideals, customs and institutions of a society or culture.

These can be positive or obstructive to perception. The key to effective communication with regard to values is to first recognise that we all look at things differently, so we must observe rather than judge.

Officers and individuals are likely to trust each other when an understanding and appreciation is made of each other's values.

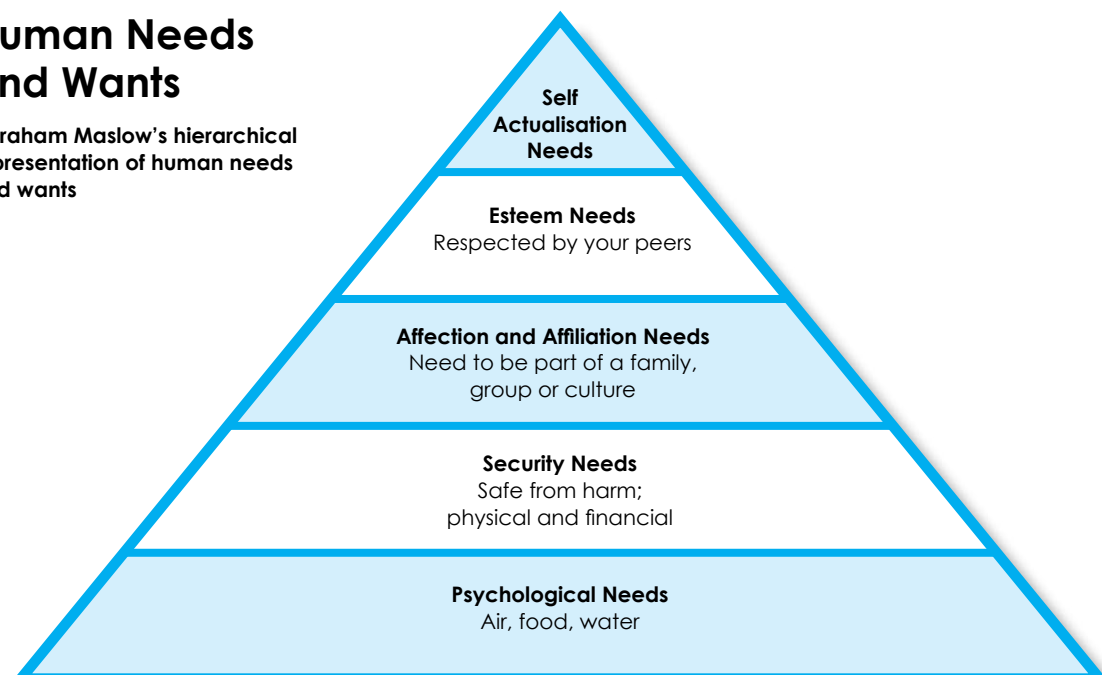
Needs

Needs are defined as a requirement or a lack of something essential.

Abraham Maslow identified five different levels of need. In this hierarchical representation, an individual who is extremely hungry is unlikely to be motivated by a higher need until that base need is fulfilled. This can therefore have an impact on the perceptual process.

Human Needs and Wants

Abraham Maslow's hierarchical representation of human needs and wants



Confrontation Handling

When confronting aggressive behaviour, successful resolution may be achieved by calming the emotions and then building a rapport with the individual once they are back to thinking rationally.

It is in calming the emotional mind that the rational mind's ability to inhibit violent behaviour can be utilised.

It is at this time that the officers' knowledge of the communication process can be used tactically to handle difficult people.

Those dealing with the incident should be assertive, signal non-aggression, and use active listening skills at the same time being aware of their own and other's attitudes and behaviours.

A four-stage sequence to handle confrontation is set out below; the officer **intervenes**, **calms** the individual, then builds **rapport** with them before finally achieving **control** over the situation and hopefully resolution of the conflict.

Stage 1: Intervention

Sometimes it can be difficult to draw an individual's attention, particularly if they are involved in a dispute or under the influence of drink or drugs.

They may not be acting rationally, so may not respond just to the officer's physical presence.

It may be necessary for the officer to change energy levels, speed, tone and level of their voice.

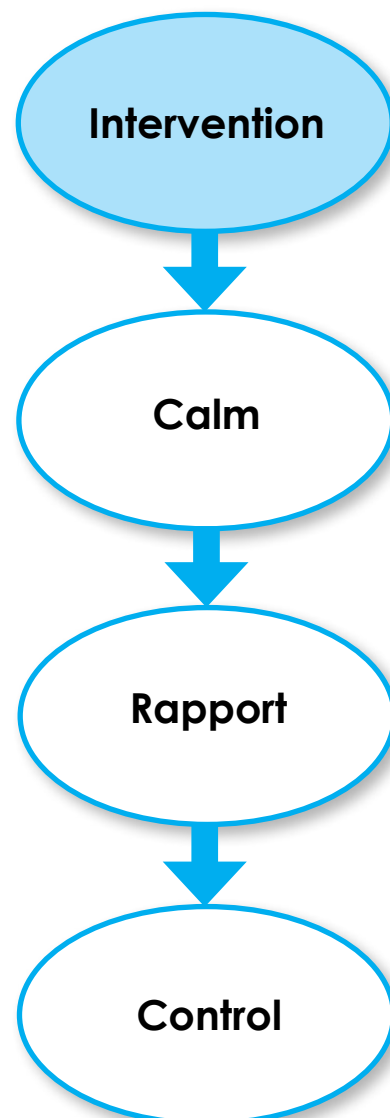
Some circumstances may dictate that the intervention will have to be a use of reasonable force in its own right, for example, batons or incapacitant spray. It is good practice, where possible, to talk slowly and in a soft calming manner.

This may not be effective however until the officer has the subject's full attention.

The officer must avoid aggravating the situation by an inadvertent or misplaced comment.

Those attending the incident should be self-controlled and act professionally, being prepared to ignore, distract or divert abuse.

If possible the officer should move slowly, give the individual space, whilst adopting a basic or interview stance.



Stage 2: Calm

This stage aims to deal with the emotional mind.

Officers should give the other person time to speak, continue to signal non-aggression, adopt a relaxed posture and use friendly, open gestures.

The officer should introduce themselves, ask the individual their name and use this. They should acknowledge emotional feelings and be open to what the individual is saying.

Officers should attempt to get the individual to deal with their emotions of upset or anger before dealing with the incident itself.

By giving the individual time to speak about their emotions the rational mind has the opportunity to regain control of their behaviour.

Active listening should be used throughout. Remaining open to what the individual is saying starts the rapport building process.



INFO POINT

Active listening has been described as "a system of opening and maintaining communications through the use of empathy, listening and body language".

Human beings have basic animal instincts which often come to the fore when they are threatened and feel frightened or angry.

This triggers a fight or flight response.

For further information on the Fight or Flight response:



**GO TO: MODULE 05:
PERSONAL MANAGEMENT**

Some factors that increase the likelihood of a fight response are:

- an individual feels that their personal space is being invaded
- an individual feels physically threatened
- an individual's exit path is blocked.

One of the most effective ways of defusing this natural fight response is for officers to deliberately signal that they are not going to respond in an aggressive way.

This is not easy when the officer may feel threatened themselves.

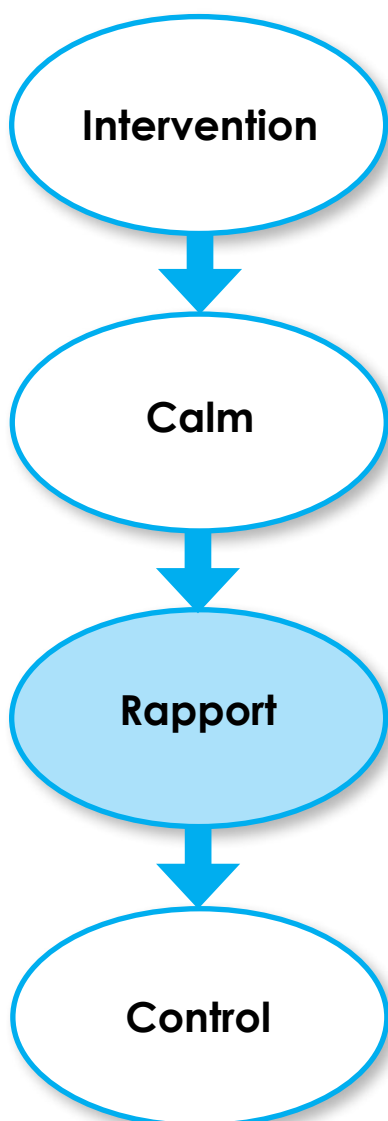


Stage 3: Rapport

At this stage of the process the individual may be thinking less emotionally and so it will be easier to start problem solving. In order to do so the officer should build up some trust before getting them to talk about their problems. This is where it is important to have some rapport with the individual.

Active listening skills should be used to good effect. Officers need to be able to listen carefully and comprehend the whole of the message which is being sent, both verbally and non-verbally.

This is particularly difficult in an emotionally charged situation in which the use of reasonable force is still a possibility.



People have the capacity to hear up to 400 words a minute but speak only 120 words a minute. It is this additional capacity in hearing which permits the mind to wander ahead and develop potential and often incorrect responses.

Therefore it is essential that the entire content of the individual's message is listened to. There can be a tendency to jump ahead of the speaker and plan the next reply or next question. This can lead to important information being missed.

Active listening helps to prevent misunderstandings from arising. The following strategies may assist:

- Try to be open, receptive and don't prejudge; be unbiased and fair
- Listen to the whole message, taking note of words, tone and body language
- Empathise, i.e. demonstrate understanding
- Paraphrase what they have told you and check understanding
- Avoid criticism and offer praise appropriately
- If necessary criticise their behaviour rather than them personally
- Do not fake understanding
- Do not take sides; this may create problems in the future
- Look at the person to show you are listening to them
- Nod your head to indicate understanding or to encourage them to continue talking
- Use open questions to open up conversation
- Use pauses appropriately to allow the person to respond
- Interpret what is said but be aware of cross-cultural differences
- Stand at a comfortable distance from them and slightly side-on to promote co-operation
- If possible act on what is said; even if the matter appears trivial to you, 'appearing to act' will often achieve the same result as actually acting
- Make it clear that you have plenty of time for the conversation.

Stage 4: Control

In the control phase of this model the officer is hoping to achieve a 'win-win' situation, that is, a resolution that is beneficial to all parties. This will not always be possible.

As every situation is different there cannot be any hard and fast rules however the following strategies may be of benefit:

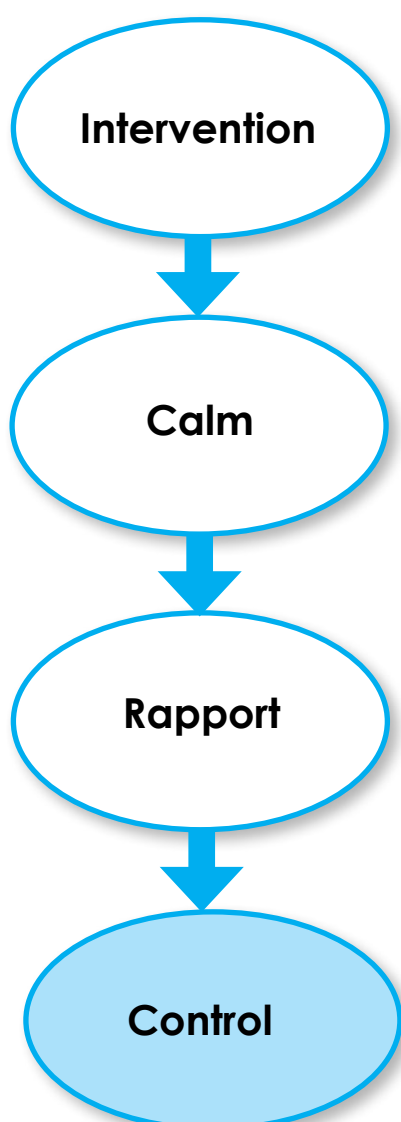
- Break the issue(s) into smaller component parts. By dealing with the component parts this may assist in resolving the overall issue(s) more easily.
- Avoid giving the impression that aggression has resulted in the subject's demands being met as this may store up problems later

- If promises are made, ensure that these are carried out so far as possible. If this is not possible be prepared to explain why.
- Have an open, flexible attitude when dealing with the public and treat others as you would like to be treated yourself.
- Be assertive where appropriate whilst still using active listening skills.



INFO POINT

Consider repetition of the whole process at any stage to achieve the desired result. This is especially true if the individual goes back into an emotional state again.



Methods of Establishing Trust

Individuals tend to trust others who speak, act and look like themselves.

Officers can use this to good effect when establishing trust by:

- looking for common ground between them and the subject
- investing the time to learn the facts and pertinent information about the individual
- being empathetic and considering how the individual must be feeling at that moment
- considering how the individual is dressed; if they are dressed casually then consider responding appropriately, e.g. remove headgear, sit down if it is safe to do so.

Do not attempt to 'play a part' that you do not know or understand.

A lack of sincerity may have the reverse effect.

Assertiveness

Assertiveness can be a powerful tool for managing resistant and abusive groups and individuals.

It is a calm, non-antagonist way of challenging specific behaviour. It does not make judgments on the aggressor, for example,

"I want to help you but you make that very difficult for me when you shout and swear."

Assertive behaviour is not a skill that comes easily to everyone and is something which requires practice. Care needs to be taken to not push assertive behaviour into aggressive behaviour.

Confidence in their own abilities and knowledge of powers and procedures will help officers to generate an air of authority.

A lack of confidence may be visible in the officer's non-verbal communications.

There are many different types of assertion, for example, empathic, responsive, consequential, positive, negative, etc. This section highlights some good practice and is a framework for basic assertion.

The basic assertion technique, to which many of the others can be linked, has three set elements that can be dealt with in any order:

Situation; a very brief description of the situation now or the immediate history.

Consequences; may be obvious but it is important that these are expressed. When they include feelings, wants or desires the officer should speak in the first person.

Aim; is how you would like the situation to be resolved. It is worth bearing in mind the wants and desires of the other person.

Assertion - example 1

"I want to help you but you make that very difficult for me when you shout and swear."

Aim

"I want to help you"

Consequences

"but you make that very difficult for me"

Situation

"when you shout and swear."

Assertion - example 2

"When you talk to me like that, it really winds me up. I want you to stop it please."

Situation

"When you talk to me like that,"

Consequences

"it really winds me up."

Aim

"I want you to stop it please."

When being assertive make sure any criticism is directed at the individual's behaviour and not at them personally.

Personal criticism can create a downward spiral into violence.

Officers do not have to compromise their position to calm a situation.

Being assertive rather than aggressive or submissive fosters self respect and allows authority to be maintained.

Potential Barriers to Communication

There are a number of factors that are a potential barrier to effective communication. This section identifies potential barriers and offers good practice guidance for overcoming them.

Mental Ill Health

Officers are not expected to diagnose mental ill health in individuals that they come into contact with.

Officers may however become aware, by a variety of means, that the person they are dealing with is believed to be experiencing mental distress or ill health. For further information see ABD in the Medical Implications Module.



**GO TO: MODULE 04:
MEDICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Further detailed information can be obtained from the ACPO 2010 Guidance on 'Responding to People with Mental Ill Health or Learning Disabilities'.



**[http://www.npia.
police.uk/en/docs/
Mental_ill_Health.pdf](http://www.npia.police.uk/en/docs/Mental_ill_Health.pdf)**

The following are some indicators of what a person may display who is experiencing mental distress or ill health. There are also a number of strategies which may assist officers.

These have been obtained from the mental health charity Mind and are reproduced with their permission.



www.mind.org.uk

Possible indicators of mental ill health

It is important to stress that the following are possible indicators. Officers are not expected to be able to make a diagnosis. Officers must follow ACPO Guidance and force policy when dealing with persons who may be experiencing mental ill health.

Possible indicators

- Being restless and agitated
- Waking up early, having difficulty sleeping, or sleeping more
- Feeling tired and lacking energy; doing less and less
- Using more tobacco, alcohol or other drugs than usual
- Not eating properly and losing or putting on weight
- Crying a lot
- Difficulty remembering things
- Physical aches and pains with no physical cause
- Feeling low-spirited for much of the time, every day
- Being unusually irritable or impatient
- Getting no pleasure out of life or what they usually enjoy
- Finding it hard to concentrate or make decisions
- Blaming themselves and feeling unnecessarily guilty about things
- Lacking self-confidence and self-esteem
- Being preoccupied with negative thoughts
- Feeling numb, empty and despairing
- Feeling helpless
- Distancing themselves from others; not asking for support



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next column**

- Taking a bleak, pessimistic view of the future
- Experiencing a sense of unreality
- Frantic efforts to avoid being alone
- A pattern of unstable and intense relationships
- A very uncertain, shaky self-image or sense of self
- Two or more areas of their life where their behaviour could cause them harm and be seen as impulsive, for example:
 - spending money extravagantly and having huge debts
 - having unprotected sex
 - abusing drugs or alcohol
 - driving without due care
 - binge-eating
- They may have moods that are very difficult to come out of
- Terrible feelings of emptiness
- Anger that's inappropriate, intense or difficult to control
- Periods of paranoia or feeling unreal when under stress
- Upset, anxious, confused and suspicious of other people, particularly anyone who doesn't agree with their perceptions. They may be reluctant to believe they need help
- Strange thinking ('Thought disorder')
- Hallucinations
- Delusions
- Negative symptoms such as being withdrawn, apathetic, and unable to concentrate, are described as 'negative' rather than 'positive', because they are less clear-cut
- Putting themselves in danger (e.g. walking into the path of moving traffic or on railway lines)

- Talking about seeing things/hearing voices that can't be seen/heard by others
- Perceived irrational conversation or behaviour
- Engaging in threatening behaviour towards others for no obvious reason
- Asking for help with their mental health
- Threatening or engaged in self-harm
- Threatening or attempting suicide
- Removing clothing for no apparent reason
- Unresponsive to others
- Showing signs of severe malnourishment
- Confusion and disorientation
- Paranoid beliefs
- Hopelessness
- Impulsiveness
- Inappropriate or difficult to understand behaviour
- Inappropriate or difficult to understand responses to questioning

The following five may also indicate the presence of a learning disability

- Poor understanding of simple questions
- Apparent suggestibility
- Confused response to questions
- Speech difficulties
- Eagerness to please

Strategies for de-escalating

The elements of a de-escalation strategy when dealing with a person experiencing mental ill health will depend on the context and environment. However, the following principles may be applied:

- Approach the individual calmly with a low consistent voice.
- Be clear about what is happening; if it is for example imminent arrest then it is important to clarify the next stage.
- As much as possible reassure the person that you are no physical threat to them. In many instances where an individual is psychotic they may truly believe that you want to do them some serious harm. It is therefore important to reassure repeatedly as necessary.
- Ask them if they need help, for instance you can ask if the person feels like they want to self harm or have suicidal thoughts. This must be done in a gentle and thoughtful manner. Take threats to harm themselves seriously.
- Be alert to changes in behaviour and use instinct where worried. Seek advice and support from a medical professional.
- Tell them you understand the situation is frightening.
- Where possible calm the individual before any further action is taken. Avoid restraint where an individual is in the middle of a highly aroused state (unless of course there is a physical risk of harm to self and others) because this may exacerbate not only the immediate crisis but trigger other more worrying or potentially longer term symptoms.
- Be aware of physical stance and tone of voice. Where possible it is important to have an open non threatening stance with a low and calm voice. If you are feeling anxious be aware that this will at some level be obvious to the individual. It might feel less threatening if you were standing sideways as opposed to front on, down to the person's sight level.
- Summarise what the person has said to you.
- Use open ended questions where appropriate. Do not use an instructive or parental tone unless absolutely necessary.
- Also, bearing in mind one simple fact, 'how would you treat them if they were a friend or relative' can sometimes alter your course of actions.

This is not an exhaustive list.



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next column**

Reducing the possibility of agitation

The following are strategies that could help reduce the possibility of agitation when dealing with individuals experiencing mental ill health:

- In all instances clarity is important. This may mean using mental health advocates or translators. It is reported that a lack of understanding about process and procedure exacerbates feelings of anxiety and distress. It is always better to over communicate than to under-communicate, repeating words and phrases can act as a containing factor for an individual in distress.
- Adopt a sensitive and non judgemental approach, for example, friendly banter although be aware of the potential for mockery.
- Be human and compassionate; this is possible especially when you are clear about your role and next steps in the process.
- Make contact with a significant other.
- Provision of medication; obviously once clarified by a doctor or medical staff.
- It maybe that the individual has had past experiences of being arrested that may have been very negative, it may be possible to clarify with the individual what went wrong so the same mistakes are not repeated.
- Individuals experiencing mental ill health may be concerned about sectioning, if they are able to understand that sectioning is absolutely the last port of call this may go some way to calming their anxiety.

This is not an exhaustive list.

When an individual experiencing mental ill health is confronted by a difficult or confusing situation it is not true that they will always react in a negative, abusive or violent way. However it is true that an individual maybe more vulnerable to:

- their symptoms being exacerbated
- becoming confused and distressed – in some instances this may lead to behavioural agitation
- potential escalation of paranoid fear with regards to consequences, i.e. fear of being sectioned under the Mental Health Act or fear that their children will be taken into care
- self harm or suicidal thoughts.



GOOD PRACTICE

The following are some specific things to do when having contact with a person who may be experiencing mental ill health:

- **Do not** shout or use a raised voice, stay calm yourself.
- **Do not** use threatening language such as 'if you don't be quiet we will restrain you or section you' instead inform the individual the circumstances where restraint or detention under the Mental Health Act 1983 may occur.
- If the person is sitting down try and sit at eye level.
- Keep language appropriate to **the situation**.
- Minimize the number of people needed to deal with the situation.
- Use appropriate non-verbal communicators.

This is not an exhaustive list.



Alcohol and Drugs

Alcohol and drugs are mind altering and therefore can change the perception of the subject. If the officer recognises the presence of alcohol or drugs then the situation is not irretrievable.

There is a higher risk that the subject may not be compliant due the influence of drugs or alcohol or may exhibit certain behaviours like irritability or slurred speech. The officer should maintain tactical awareness at all times and communicate accordingly without antagonising the situation.

Disability

Certain disabilities may make communication more difficult. Depending on what the disability is the officer should assess and adapt their communications accordingly. If a person is deaf for example, the officer should move to a position where the subject can clearly see

their lips move, more hand gestures may be required or assistance with sign language gained. Speech impediments may also be an area where an officer seeks assistance from a friend or family member if available.

Environment

There may be environmental barriers to communication (e.g. noise pollution) and physical barriers (e.g. doors, other people, vehicles or distance).



GOOD PRACTICE

The officer should assess the situation and try to minimise or remove the barrier(s) where possible. This may mean moving to another environment for example. If this is not possible the officer should assess the value in continuing to attempt to communicate at that point and re-evaluate their options.

Verbal Communication

There are a number of ways in which verbal communication problems may arise. The most obvious is where individuals do not speak the same language. The more common and less obvious problems arise where the language used is the same but there are differences in the use of certain terms or phrases, the manner in which a person speaks, or the meaning attributed to specific words and phrases.



GOOD PRACTICE

Officers should speak as clearly as possible, use simplistic language where appropriate and check for understanding from the person being spoken to.

Tone of Voice

Tone of voice is another aspect which is frequently in danger of being misunderstood. Within some groups raising the voice is associated with becoming angry and losing control, or with trying to impose oneself aggressively upon a conversation or other situation. Value tends to be placed upon 'keeping cool and behaving rationally'.

In other groups volume, pitch and manner of delivery do not necessarily convey the same meaning, nor are they necessarily judged in the same way. Using a loud voice does not necessarily indicate loss of control, hostility nor an aggressive disposition. Treating people as if this is the case may often be perceived as patronising, with the result that they may at the very least become angry.

In the same way, if officers interpret the loud talk and the animation of a group of young people on the street as aggressive behaviour, they may through their own response induce the very behaviour they are seeking to prevent.

The manner of voice delivery may also give rise to misunderstanding. The emphasis put on certain words, the pitch and intonation varies between different groups and cultures. Some accents and dialects can be perceived by others as abrupt or aggressive due to the speed of delivery, monotone or staccato variation in the pitch. At the least this is likely to be an exaggerated perception, and often it may simply be incorrect, as it will be the person's normal mode of speech.



GOOD PRACTICE

Officers need to be aware of the implications of using their own voice appropriately in any given situation. Be aware that someone using their voice in a loud manner does not necessarily mean a threat and that each situation is likely to be different. Officers should therefore weigh-up the context of the situation when interpreting tone of voice.

Inappropriate Words or Expressions

It is a sad fact that, in all areas of society offensive terms exist to refer to members of particular groups.

Other than in the reporting of evidence, their offensiveness should be clear and not tolerated.

There are however, words or expressions which may be used by some members of society without them being aware of the negative impact these may have on others.

Similarly there are expressions that are quite clearly offensive or inflammatory.

For example, over-generalisations such as speaking about a group of people as "all being the same" or phrases conveying a patronising attitude such as "you people must realise" or referring to "the way we do things here".

Another way can be to imply that certain groups have particular characteristics; this is an example of 'stereotypical' phraseology.

Cross-Cultural Communication

When people from different cultures communicate there can be a number of obstacles preventing the message being correctly received.

Clearly it would be impossible to list all the idiosyncrasies of all different cultures, indeed there would be little point as no-one could learn them all as no-one could learn to speak every language.

It would be sensible however for officers to become familiar with those traits which they are more likely to come into contact with.

Culture goes a long way in forming a person's frame of reference, but employees need to be aware that their own culture can sometimes force them to misinterpret behaviour of someone outside their own ethnic group.

What may be perceived as aggression by one party may be simply exuberance on the part of the other.

There are obvious dangers when getting this wrong, from your own personal safety to accusations of over-reacting or even assault.

When trying to get your message across it must be accepted that this is more likely to take longer, so allow more time. Use active listening skills when receiving the information and check understanding throughout.



GOOD PRACTICE

Have an awareness of terminology. Use operational guides to assist with this however it may also be an option to communicate with communities and community leaders to gain advice.

People who are not fluent in a language are more likely to bring with them not only their own accent, but also their own language's intonation.

This can cause problems as the emphasis on some words in a sentence can alter it's meaning, or give a contradictory message.

In this case place more emphasis on the words themselves, rather than the way they are said.

In the middle of this dilemma there is some good news.



INFO POINT

The body's reaction to acute stress is near enough the same across all cultures.

So by paying attention to the danger cues this will assist in making a more accurate threat assessment.

Likewise signalling non-aggression may well be effective in demonstrating your wish not to inflame a situation.

Racial and Ethnic Terminology

Confusion, for example, may arise unless the meaning of racial and ethnic terms (e.g. 'Asian', 'Black') is not made clear and their relevance specified.

It should be borne in mind that the use of certain racial or ethnic terms (e.g. 'Coloured', 'Oriental' and 'Half Caste') is likely to give offence to those to whom they are applied.



GOOD PRACTICE

It may be a question of learning through experience in some cases, however through initial and ongoing training officers will become more aware of words and expressions that are inappropriate and be able to build on any previous life experiences. These words and expressions should be avoided and appropriate alternatives used instead.

Jargon, Slang and Figures of Speech

The use of slang expressions, which are familiar to those who have grown up in a specific area or region, may exclude other individuals from following the meaning of what is said. Jokes and implicit assumptions may also give rise to similar confusion and misunderstanding in the minds of others from outside that group.

As an organisation the police service is prone to the use of abbreviations, mnemonics and terminology that is only understood within the police family. Whilst we are not alone in this process their use outside this arena can not easily be understood.

Certain figures of speech whilst historically and widely used, may have different meaning to people from different groups. Consider these in the context with who you are communicating with.



GOOD PRACTICE

Officers need to express themselves in as direct and explicit a manner as possible when communicating with people. Avoid using jargon and slang in environments where it may be deemed as inappropriate, offensive or may not be understood.

Accent, Dialect and Mispronunciation

English is spoken across the world with a diverse range of accents. Within the UK alone the variety of regional accents is vast. In the main these variations are normally easily understood.

This is repeated around the world with all languages having regional and geographical variations.

Where English may not be a person's primary language strong accents and rapid speech

patterns, different from those of their own languages, may create difficulties with understanding and pronunciation.

This is a situation which may arise in any multi-lingual or multi-cultural society, and calls for patience and tolerance on the part of all.

If an officer or individual who has difficulty in being understood feels under pressure on this account, they may speed up rather than slow down, and the accent may then become even stronger.

The same applies if the officer has a particularly difficult accent to understand, a subject may be able to understand one officer's accent but not the officer's colleague for example.



GOOD PRACTICE

As with all communication this is a two way process, the officer needs to ensure, by whatever means, that the subject has understood what they were intending to communicate and that they understand what the subject is communicating. Checking with a colleague, using friends or family members and use of language lines and interpreters are amongst many options to confirm the communication is effective.

Speech Delivery

Certain members of the community may feel extremely nervous and lacking in confidence when dealing with law enforcement officers, especially when speaking in a formal, public domain.

In addition some females within certain groups (especially among the older generation) may find speaking with male officers difficult or embarrassing as a result of religious or cultural issues. This may be particularly the case when issues of an intimate or personal nature are under discussion.

This may be manifested by individuals speaking very softly, or having difficulty in projecting the voice, or by not being forthcoming generally.

On the other hand some people in particular may feel suspicious or angry on account of past experiences, real or imaginary, and may sometimes express this in a forthright and apparently aggressive manner, occasionally even in an outburst of some kind.



GOOD PRACTICE

Reducing pressure by allowing extra time for individuals to speak may often be sufficient to overcome communication difficulties. Reassurance can also assist the process.

Using Interpreters

A more fundamental difficulty arises when a person has difficulty in understanding the required language or is hearing impaired and an interpreter needs to be involved in the communication process.

The role of interpreter is primarily to provide a technically efficient and accurate translation of what has been said.

Therefore the first qualification required of an interpreter is that the person has the necessary skill and integrity for undertaking this task.



INFO POINT

If consideration is given to using a member of the public, friend or family member, caution should be applied as to whether they are emotionally involved and will relay the message in an accurate and relevant manner.

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication, as previously explained, demands our attention for two reasons.

The first is that it is a powerful form of communication, the use and effects of which we are normally unaware.

The second is that forms of non-verbal communication, like verbal languages, differ between individuals and groups and thus, especially on account of their unconscious operation, have considerable potential for causing misunderstanding.

At first sight the solution would therefore simply appear to be to develop a bank of knowledge about the typical non-verbal cues that relate to members of different backgrounds and groups.

It is dangerous to assume that all those who identify (or are identified) with a particular group will necessarily display the same non-verbal behaviour.

Not only may there be differences within the group such as gender or social class, but there are also likely to be differences between individuals.

Consider the differences in style and temperament amongst the friends within your own friendship groups.

There is therefore great danger in moving towards over-generalisation about non-verbal behaviour, and of thus creating stereotypes about behaviour of members of particular groups.

It is normally only when we stop and reflect on the way individuals use non-verbal communication that we become aware of the many ways in which we may use the body as a means of communication.

We most often think of gestures involving the hands, these are more likely to be conscious and intended.

Whilst these are important in the non-verbal part of the communication process, undoubtedly facial expressions form a major part in establishing a person's intentions or feelings.

The eyes are an extremely important means of communication as they can give an indication of feelings.

This closely links to the perceived ability of the eyes to convey whether a person is (or is not) respectful, sincere or even if they are telling the truth.

In some cultures when a young person looks a person in authority in the eyes it is a signal of respect and integrity.

Whereas in other cultures it can indicate a lack of respect, impudence or insult instead looking away from authority figures tends to be how a subordinate or young person indicates deference and respect.



GOOD PRACTICE

Officers should avoid stereotyping in this context and have an open mind regarding NVC'S whilst bearing in mind that basic signs of aggression/danger cues are reasonably similar across society.

An officer needs to weigh up the balance of non-verbal behaviours in line with any words and phraseology to assess the subject's current state and be prepared for any changes from these behaviours.

Care should be taken to avoid making generalisations about the eye behaviour of any specific group and reacting to these generalisations. It is useful to have specific knowledge of what eye behaviour generally means in any particular group and but more important to be aware how easily one may unconsciously interpret such behaviour incorrectly.



Proxemics and Positioning

Posture, positioning of the body and body movement generally are other important means of non-verbal communication.

Here too, care must be taken before interpreting the behaviour of others and making assumptions or setting standards.

For example, positioning of the body in relation to others has been shown to vary between groups as to the degree of closeness and general demeanour that is

acceptable. In all cultures people desire to maintain a certain amount of space around them and may feel uncomfortable if this is invaded.

When such invasion occurs or is threatened, avoidance or offensive/defensive action may be initiated.

Proxemics, defined by Edward T. Hall in the 1960's, is the distances between two or more individuals. The following zones are derived from Hall's work:

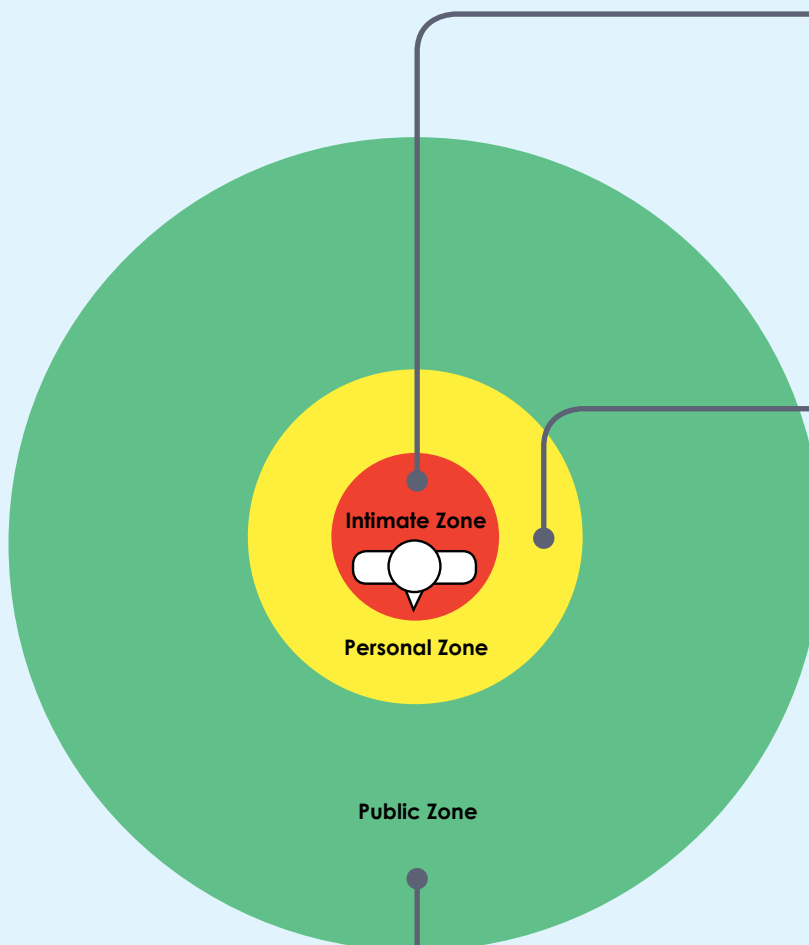
Further information on Proxemics and Positioning, as well as the Clock System is available in:



**MODULE 05
PERSONAL
MANAGE-
MENT**

Proxemics zones

It is the personal and public zones, subject to cultural issues, that most verbal and non-verbal interaction takes place.



• **The Intimate Zone;** refers to very close contact (embracing, touching or whispering) from 0 - 0.5m (18 inches). This space may be reserved for intimate contact or fighting, however this may depend upon cultural issues.

• **The Personal Zone;** refers to the area from 0.5m — 1.8m (18 inches to 6 feet). It is the personal distance for interactions among good friends or family members.

• **The Public Zone;** refers to the distance beyond 1.8m (6 feet). This incorporates the social zone. It may, with some cultural and environmental issues, be difficult to communicate across this potentially safer zone. Officers may move into this zone dependant on the perceived threat assessment.



Within any particular group social norms of proxemics and body positioning are learned in childhood and subsequently applied unconsciously. Due to the nature of the policing role in dealing with people in tense and public settings, officers are vulnerable to becoming involved in misunderstandings regarding this non-verbal communication.

Body movement is also capable of creating considerable misunderstanding. Particular care should be taken as to how behaviours such as animation or fidgeting should be interpreted, as well as apparent disinterest or looking away repeatedly.

Generally speaking, it should be presumed that to make any inferences from such behaviour about honesty or integrity could be dangerous and unreliable.

Officers need to be aware of the ways in which their own body language might possibly be misunderstood by the certain individuals and groups within the community. In particular,

care should be taken to ensure that their body language does not unwittingly imply ridicule or contempt, for example through raised eyebrows, exchanged glances, or signs of exasperation, impatience or incredulity. Some subtle or impromptu forms of bodily expression may be barely noticeable by the officer or individual who gives such signals however if detected can be problematic.



GOOD PRACTICE

An awareness of the officer's own body language, expressions and mannerisms is advised in relation to proxemics and positioning.

Colleagues can give feedback on this in the training and operational environment.

Officers should also be aware that they will be communicating with a diverse range of subjects, all of which may have a different perception of what is acceptable in terms of proxemics.

The officer's main priority is the safety of themselves, colleagues and members of the public.

Emotional vs Rational Brain

In general terms the way a person behaves or responds to a situation is controlled by either the rational or emotional part of the brain.

For the vast majority of their waking hours a person will be controlled by their rational brain. At other times our responses may be more emotional and this is much more likely when we are under stress.

Reactions to situations will not necessarily be reasoned and controlled. The responses given to commands, directions or replies to questions will also be affected.

In practice this means that as the body responds to the stress stimulus the brain gives priority to those areas that control simple movements of fighting and running. Therefore parts of the brain concerned with concentration, judgement and analytical skills

suffer. The brain will also prioritise the information it receives, filtering or excluding that which it can do without for the immediate time. This is referred to as 'peripheral shutdown'. Commonly the sense of hearing will diminish, as this is not needed; this is termed 'auditory exclusion'.

As the stress increases the responses will become even more emotional and the person will find their ability to think rationally and therefore communicate, diminishes until they will not be 'thinking' cognitively at all.

These physical and mental changes affect the communication process and take place both in officers and those who may be in conflict with them. It is not possible to prevent these responses from happening, but officers can learn to recognise them and deal with the consequences.

Further information on Emotional vs Rational Brain is available in:



MODULE 05
PERSONAL
MANAGE
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Left-Brain Functions

Analytic Thought

Logic

Language

Rational

Objective

Reality-based

"Thinking"

Right-Brain Functions

Thought

Intuition

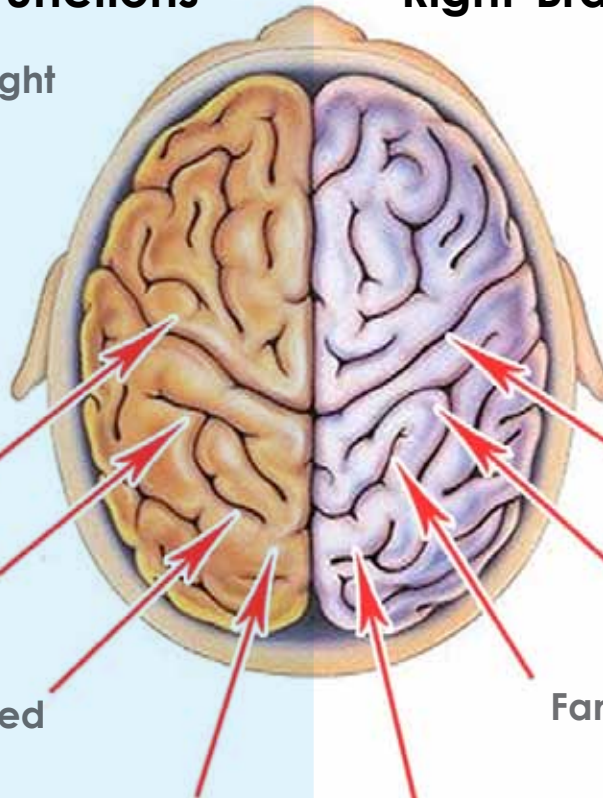
Creativity

Emotional

Impetuous

Fantasy-based

"Reacting"



Attitude and Behaviour

The Oxford English Dictionary defines:

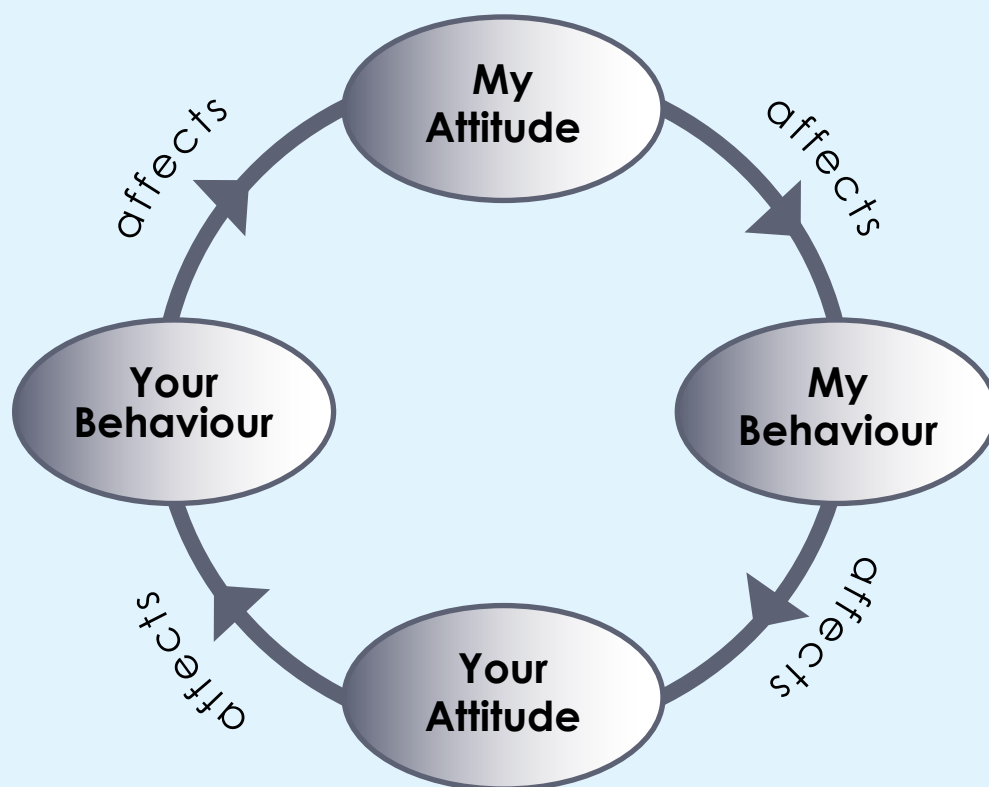
- Attitude "as a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, typically one that is reflected in a person's behaviours"
- Behaviour "as the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others".

Attitudes are considered to be an internal thought process. Behaviour can be how this thought process is exhibited externally both verbally and non-verbally.

A simple model used in police training and by others who deal in people management and conflict resolution is known as **Betari's Box**.

Betari's Box

This illustration shows the way in which officers and individuals can get locked into a cycle of behaviour which, if it remains unchecked, can escalate out of control.



GOOD PRACTICE

The role of an officer is to deal effectively with a situation, and because officers are the very people in society who have authority, it is their role to attempt to break any negative cycle of attitude and behaviour that may exist.



INFO POINT

You can only control your own attitude and behaviour. Break the unconscious loop by noticing how the behaviour of others makes you feel and refuse to let it affect your attitude.

Perceptual Blocks to Communication

Perceptual blocks can limit the entry of stimuli or information into the mind and distort reality to such an extent that an officer or individual is not fully connected with reality and to what is going on at the moment of interaction or confrontation. People carry blocks to perception deep within, creating a barrier through which the world is seen and understood.

Confusion arises when officers and individuals find it impossible to either understand or accept the differences in viewpoints that exist amongst others. Confusion is a product of the inevitable differences which can arise from both the individual nature of perception and/or a number of perceptual blocks.

Stereotyping

A stereotype is a popular held belief about specific social groups or types of individuals. Stereotypes are standardised and simplified conceptions of groups based on some prior assumptions. Stereotyping leads to misunderstanding on the part of the perceiver and resentment on the part of the perceived. For example, all youths are 'up to no good' and all gypsy and traveller groups are thieves.

Halo and horns effect

This was first researched by Edward L. Thorndike in 1920 and is closely linked to stereotyping. The halo effect is a cognitive bias whereby the perception of one trait (i.e. a characteristic of a person or object) is influenced by the perception of another trait (or several traits) of that person or object. An example would be judging a good-looking person as more intelligent. This is a positive judgement or 'halo effect'. The reverse process can occur whereby perception of one trait is influenced negatively by the



perception of another trait or traits. This is referred to as the 'reverse halo effect' or the 'horns effect'.

Traits that can be viewed negatively by an officer or individual are tattoos, ankle chains, short cropped hair and public order equipment.

Selective perception

Selective perception or confirmation bias, is a tendency to favour information that confirms preconceptions or a point of view and discard that information which defies it, regardless of whether the information is true.

Information is selectively screened and information that confirms our own biases is allowed through and positively accepted. This can be both an unconscious and a conscious process.

Projection

This type of block is built around transferring our attitudes and feelings onto others without truly understanding how they view a particular situation.

Projection may lead us to assume attitudes without allowing others to be honest in their feelings. This may cloud reality and alienate others by trying to force the views of others upon them.

Self-fulfilling prophecy

A self-fulfilling prophecy is a prediction or belief that directly or indirectly causes itself to become true. This occurs due to positive feedback between the belief and subsequent behaviour. For example, if a person thinks we are stupid, they will treat us that way. If we are treated as if we are stupid, we will in time act and even become this way. The person has thus had their prophecy about us fulfilled.

In other words, a prophecy declared as truth when it is actually false (all youths are a nuisance and cause trouble) may sufficiently influence people (youths themselves), either through fear or logical confusion (reinforced through the behaviour of others including the public and police),

so that their reactions ultimately fulfil the once-false prophecy (youth arrested for nuisance crime).

Rose coloured glasses syndrome

An officer or individual with an optimistic outlook on life may filter all events through a set of glasses which are rosy.

While this in itself is not a block, it may become so when dealing with volatile, confrontational or difficult situations where evil or threat is filtered out as if it does not exist.

The opposite perspective is known as the 'dark glasses syndrome', which sees evil, uncertainty and threat within everything.

These perception blocks to communication can be distorting in such a way that the officer or individual may not really see or understand what is happening outside of themselves.



GOOD PRACTICE

The key is to recognise the kinds of perceptual blocks which the officer or individual has and work to overcome them.



Warning Signs and Danger Cues

By focusing on gesture clusters it is possible to gain clues as to the attitudes and feelings of the individual who is exhibiting them.

Gesture clusters may indicate how someone is thinking or feeling.

Officers can observe such gesture clusters when 'people watching' or when socialising with friends/family.

For example, observing consistency between verbal and non-verbal communication.

- Open hands with palms up plus arms and legs in an unfolded position may signal openness
- Arms crossed on the chest or the hands closed in fists may signal defensiveness
- Silence or very few comments may be an indicator of boredom
- Tapping of the feet, drumming of the table and looking away may be signs that the receiver is disinterested.

However, in confrontational matters an individual, or indeed an officer, who is ready to be aggressive may display three levels of behaviours before committing a physical act.

These are anxiety, loss of verbal control and loss of physical control.



Anxiety

General behaviours associated with anxiety are:

- sweating and pacing about
- refusing to co-operate with an immediate authority and/or supervision
- blaming others
- belligerent towards others
- constantly swearing at others
- making unwarranted sexual remarks
- arguing increasingly with others
- refusing to obey policy and procedures
- verbally issuing a desire to hurt others
- seeing self as victimised by authority and/or management.

This is not an exhaustive list.

Loss of verbal control

Loss of verbal control can be characterised by:

- the ability to communicate becomes unintelligible and disjointed
- the use of vulgarity in an incoherent way
- baring/gritting the teeth or speaking through pursed lips.

This is not an exhaustive list.

Loss of physical control - warning signs

Generally, individuals who are going to attack or offer violence may engage in actions known as 'ritualised combat' (see Fright, Flight, Fight, Posture, Submission - [Personal Management](#)).

Identifying these non-verbal cues may give officers a significant advantage.

Several of these behaviours may be exhibited by a subject.

It is important that the officer considers these as a cluster rather than viewing each one individually.

For example, if someone tilts their head back it does not necessarily mean that an attack is imminent.

Warning signs of a loss of physical control are:

- direct prolonged eye contact
- bobbing up and down or rocking back and forth
- expanded veins in the arms, face and neck
- a change in facial colour
- the head is tilted looking upwards or down at the ground
- standing tall to maximise their height
- kicking the ground
- exaggerated movements, especially with the hands
- acceleration and deepening of breathing rate
- abrupt stopping and starting of nervous behaviour.

This is not an exhaustive list.

Loss of physical control - danger cues

As the word 'danger' implies, the cues listed here may have a higher impact potential than warning signs.

When these danger cues occur an attack may be imminent.

Neglecting or ignoring these cues may place officers at a disadvantage or in a position of danger.

- Fists clenching/unclenching
- A change in facial colour
- Lips tightening over the teeth
- Head dropping forward to protect the throat
- Eyebrows dropping forward to protect the eyes
- Hands rising above the waist
- Shoulders tensing
- Stance changing from square on to side on (fighting stance)
- Glancing at intended target areas
- Lowering of the entire body before launching an attack.

This is not an exhaustive list.

INFO POINT

Warning - Officers should be aware that some individuals are fully comfortable with confrontation and may be able to disguise their intentions. This may be because of their military or martial arts training, or their own natural fighting skill which may have been honed.



GO TO:
MODULE 03
- USE OF
FORCE

Ego State Communication

Transactional analysis, commonly known as TA, was developed by Canadian-born US psychiatrist Eric Byrne during the late 1950s.

The outcome of Byrne's research concluded that it is not just the words that we use, but the value of the words that we use that is important. All the feeling and experiences people are exposed to during infancy and childhood are unconsciously recorded in the brain. These recorded messages greatly influence our behaviour for the rest of our lives. These are observable and may be used to describe an individual's communication and demeanour (see the Use of Force Report Writing Module). These may considerably affect our style of communication and its effectiveness.

Byrne's theory of transactional analysis states that each person is made up of three ego states. These are the parent, adult and child.

Parent

The parent ego state is our ingrained voice of authority based on learning and attitudes conditioned when we were young. We were conditioned by our parents, teachers, older people, next door neighbours, aunts and uncles, and authority figures. Typical parent ego state expressions are to:

- give advice
- criticise
- moralise
- nurture and protect
- make rules and regulations
- teach
- judge
- direct or control others.

Adult

The adult ego state is our ability to think and determine action for ourselves, based on received data. It is the means by which we keep our Parent and Child under control. Typical adult ego state behaviours are to:

- store information
- plan
- check alternatives
- make decisions
- reason
- recall information
- evaluate
- estimate probabilities
- set limits.

Child

Our internal reaction and feelings to external events form the Child. This is the seeing, hearing, feeling, and emotional body of data within each of us.

The child ego state contains the memory of impulses and responses felt and made when we were young as being the source of feelings, wants and needs. When anger or despair dominates reason, the Child is in control. The child ego state is expressed as:

- anger
- fear
- rebelliousness
- curiosity
- creativity
- trust
- love
- excitement
- self-indulgence
- aggression
- co-operation.

A useful way of summarising the ego states is:

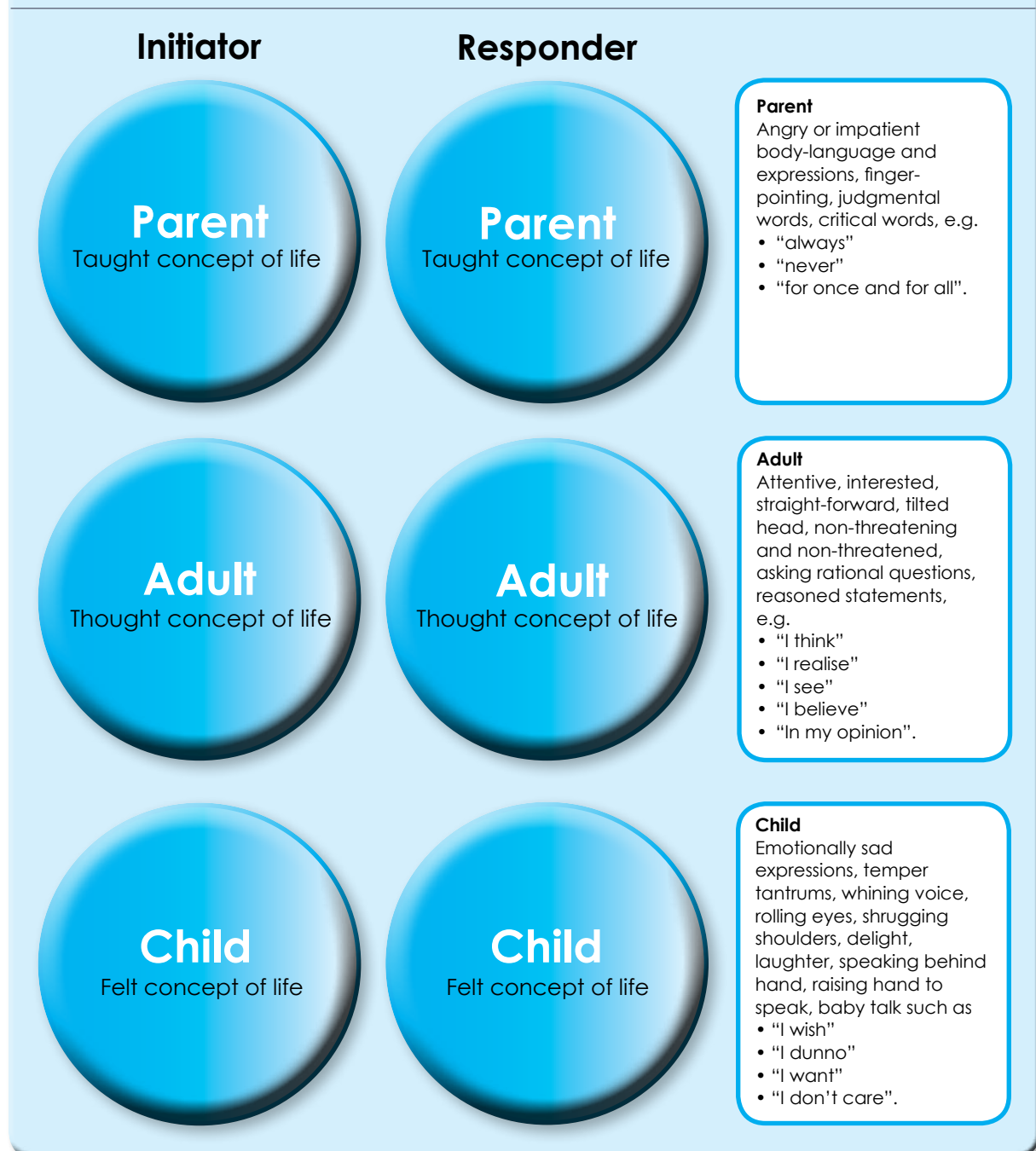
- Parent is our 'Taught' concept of life
- Adult is our 'Thought' concept of life
- Child is our 'Felt' concept of life.

When we communicate we are doing so from one of our own alter ego states.

Our feelings at the time determine which one we use, and at any time something can trigger a shift from one state to another.

When we respond we are also doing this from one of the three states.

Byrne's theory of transactional analysis



At the core of Berne's theory is the rule that effective transactions (i.e. successful communications) must be complementary or parallel. That is, they must go back from the receiving ego state to the sending ego state. For example, if the stimulus is Parent to Child, the response must be Child to Parent.

For crossed transactions, for example where the stimulus is Parent to Child and the response is Parent to Child the communication will be ineffective. Worse still either or both parties will be upset. In order for the relationship to continue smoothly the respondent must rescue the situation with a complementary transaction.

There is no general rule as to the effectiveness of any ego state in any given situation (some people get results by being dictatorial (Parent to Child), or by having temper tantrums, (Child to Parent), but for a balanced approach to life Adult to Adult is generally recommended.

It is therefore important for officers and individuals to express themselves clearly and firmly as adults so that others understand, and thereby resist the temptation to play games, argue or get upset, be angry, critical or sarcastic, especially when involved in problem-solving or trying to make oneself understood.

Sometimes we operate on more than one level at the same time. It may look as if we are having an adult-to-adult conversation, but it may be obvious that the other person is holding back criticism, annoyance, upset or hurt feelings. This is known as 'two level communication'.

If an officer or individual is communicating on two levels (the fact level and the feeling or opinion level) the feeling level will determine the outcome of the relationship. If this is so, it makes sense to find out what the feelings are or what the criticism is about. Meta talk can help to explain this.





Meta Talk

This is derived from the Greek word 'meta', which means 'above and beyond'. It refers to an individual's non-verbal communication of feelings, emotions or attitudes that go beyond their verbal communication.

It is also the hidden meaning behind phrases a person uses. The officer should try to see through the words to find out what the subject really means.

In order to resolve conflicts with individuals or gain their co-operation, officers must pay attention not only to their verbal communication but also their meta-communication.

Guidelines for using the technique of meta talk

- **Actively listen** to others. Notice whether the individual is sending a non-verbal communication that goes beyond their words.
- Observe **non-verbal** communication such as mannerisms, gestures, facial expressions and the **paralinguistic** communication such as tone, intonation, style, accuracy, brevity, and speed of the interaction.
- If apparent, officers should ask themselves what **emotions** are they sensing from the individuals:
 - anger
 - frustration
 - hurt
 - sadness
 - nervousness
 - joy
 - innuendo
 - sarcasm.

For a complete list see 'Emotional Vocabulary' in the Use of Force Reporting and Monitoring section in Module 03.

- Check out observed feelings (if appropriate) with colleagues to be sure they have been interpreted correctly.
- The officer's meta talk statement should acknowledge the individual's feelings (see Ego States) and create rapport and understanding with them.



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Questioning Skills

An officer's ability to use good quality questions is an important skill in communicating effectively with others.

Where an officer is able to establish what stimulated any aggression through the use of effective questioning, they may then be able to diffuse this stimulus and re-establish the individual's rational judgement thereby gaining control of the situation.

There are a number of types of questions which are all valid dependant upon the set of circumstances the officer is dealing with.

- **Closed question** is one that requires a 'yes' or 'no' answer. In general, it is best to avoid this type of question in any situation where information gathering is a major component.

Closed questions are particularly useful in clarifying facts, e.g.

"Do you live here?"

"Is this your car?"

"Do you know this person?"

- **Open question** is one that cannot be answered by merely saying yes or no, as it requires some elaboration.

Open questions are useful for information gathering, e.g.

"Tell me what happened"

"Who was involved?"

"Where did this take place?"

The acronym **5WH** is a useful way to remember the openers for open questions:

5W

- **Who?**
- **What?**
- **Why?**
- **Where?**
- **When?**

H

- **How?**

- **Probing question** is one that seeks more detail or confirmation when there is doubt in the officer's mind, such as when there is conflict or hesitation from the individual. Where there is incongruence between what is said and non-verbal communications probing questions can be used to explore the issue further.

Probing questions are useful for exploring, e.g.

"Tell me more about the disagreement"

"You said the person was agitated, describe how they were behaving"

"You sound frustrated, help me to understand why"

- **Leading question** is a type of question that police officers may be familiar with when appearing as a witness in court. A leading question is normally used for confirming details that have come to light in previous questioning. It suggests the answer, or contains the information the examiner is looking for. E.g. "So you ran down Laneham Street after the incident took place?" Generally this type of question should be avoided because, as the name suggests, it leads the subject.
- **Loaded question** is one to be avoided at all costs. It asks a question that presupposes something that has not been proven or accepted by all the people involved. This type of question may tend to destroy interaction and instil negative feelings within the individual. The loaded question is one to which there are no correct answers or to which all possible answers could be incriminating.
- **Power of silence**; although not strictly a question type when used in conjunction with a question it can be a powerful tool. Individuals have a tendency to fill silences as they can become uncomfortable and some individuals simply take longer to formulate a response particularly if they are in an emotional state. Where a subject is unresponsive or quiet, one approach is to pose a question and then remain silent (10-30 seconds). Silences should not be left for too long as they could be seen as oppressive.





The Leaps Model of Communication

LEAPS is a simple mnemonic that offers a flexible and structured approach to communicating not only in confrontational situations, but in all situations. Through practice officers can become experienced in using the model, so when facing a conflict situation, use of the principles may reduce their anxiety.

1: Listen

Good listeners listen for feelings as well as facts and interpret non verbal communications such as gestures which are important in a conflict situation. Effective listening means listening for the

whole message and not just taking the content at face value. Officers should keep an open mind, listen and hear, show they are actively listening and do not interrupt.

People generally spend more time listening than they spend on any other communication activity yet many never learn to listen well. One reason is that they develop poor listening skills that continue with them throughout life.

The following list contains some of the most common poor listening habits. Officers need to be aware of these potential traits and adopt good practice with each of the following points rather than allowing them to become a barrier.

Potential barriers to effective listening

Not paying attention;

Officers may allow themselves to be distracted or to think of something else. Also, not wanting to listen often contributes to a lack of attention.

Pseudo-listening;

Often officers who are thinking about something else may deliberately try to look as though they are listening. Such pretence may leave the individual with the impression that the officer has heard some important information or instructions offered by the individual.

Listening but not hearing;

Sometimes an officer may listen only to the facts or details, or to the way they were presented and miss the real meaning.

Rehearsing;

Some officers may listen until they want to say something, then they stop listening, start rehearsing what they will say and wait for the opportunity to respond.

Interrupting;

The officer may not wait until the complete meaning can be determined, but interrupts so forcefully that the individual stops in mid-sentence.

Hearing what is expected;

Officers may frequently think that they heard individuals say what they expected them to say. Alternatively, they sometimes refuse to hear what they do not want to hear.

Feeling defensive;

Officers may sometimes assume that they know the individual's intention or why something was said or, for various other reasons, they expect to be verbally confronted.

Listening for a point of disagreement;

Some officers may seem to wait for the chance to verbally confront the individuals. In this regard, they may listen intently for points upon which they can disagree.

2: Empathy

The word empathy has Latin and Greek roots;

‘em’ ‘pathy’

from the Latin
meaning ‘to
see through’

from the Greek
meaning ‘the eye
of the other’.

Dictionary definitions of empathy also include:

“Empathy is the intellectual identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, and attitudes of another.”

Collins English Dictionary

“Empathy means the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.”

Oxford English Dictionary

Empathy should not be confused with sympathy which is feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune.

Empathy may represent the greatest bridge between all cultures. It is also one of the most powerful tools in verbally persuading another person. Empathy is difficult to get right and therefore it is important for the officer to listen, be open minded about what is being said and not make judgements about the subject's actions even if they would have responded differently.

Examples of empathetic responses are:

- “I can hear how frustrated you are.”
- “I can see how that would annoy you.”
- “It seems like you felt that you had no other choice.”
- “I would be unhappy if that happened to me too.”

3: Ask

Use effective questioning techniques to ask for clarification in order to establish facts, to seek opinion and to check for understanding. Open, closed and probing questions are of particular value here and also the use of silence.



4: Paraphrase

Paraphrasing is defined as “a restatement of a text or passage giving the meaning in another form for clarity” and is simply reflecting back your understanding of the message/information received. This can be factual or emotive meaning.

For example,

“So what I am hearing is ...”

or

“You sound totally frustrated by the situation ...”.

LEAPS
stands for:

Listen
Empathise
Ask
Paraphrase
Summarise

Paraphrasing can serve a number of purposes:

- Shows interest in the individual and encourages them to listen and engage; by repeating their own words officers show they are listening.
- Officers can re-establish control; the individual is listening, the officer is talking.
- Enables officers to respond effectively to an individual; This can only be done if they have heard correctly. Paraphrasing checks out this understanding.
- The officer has created empathy; being correct is not the issue however making an attempt to get it correct is.
- Allows the individual or officer to modify the original statement; sometimes when statements are made in anguish or in haste they may not realise what they have said until it is repeated back to them.
- Clarifying effect for those people standing around who may need to be the officer's witnesses. Therefore, a clearer picture of what is being said might be to the officer's advantage. If the people standing around happen to be part of the problem, then an effective strategy to remove the hostility may be to paraphrase the leader and allow the crowd to hear and understand what they are really saying.
- Prevent individuals from putting inaccurate and unwanted words into an officer's mouth; paraphrasing is a useful tool to prevent this action as it restates what the individual has said.
- Clarifies what is actually meant; paraphrasing may be an effective tool with superiors, colleagues and family too. Do not rely on others to always say what they mean, no matter what their position, paraphrase it back.
- Paraphrasing may generate a 'fair play response'; when an individual makes an unreasonable request or demand, if they hear it paraphrased it may make them consider a fairer resolution.



5: Summarise (action)

Condense all that's been said and put it in a simple statement.

Be brief and concise and check on any actions that have been agreed.

Insults - Deflection and Redirection

As an individual moves from anxiety towards the loss of verbal control, they may often resort to swearing, vulgarity and insults.

The officer may be able to deal with these by the use of deflection and redirection strategies, such as:

- I appreciate what you are saying **but/and ...**
- I hear what you are saying **but/and ...**
- I understand you **but/and ...**

Deflection and redirection phrases deflect the insults, redirect the conversation in an appropriate direction and can disempower the individual using the insulting language.

Another subtle way of using deflection and redirection is to use third party assistance.

For example, if an individual is being confrontational towards an officer and the officer is finding communication difficult, then they may ask another individual to help.

For example,

"I can't seem to make your friend understand, could you explain to him/her what I mean?"

This may redirect the responsibility from the officer to the third party.

I Vs You Language

Use the pronoun 'I' to take responsibility and to promote co-operation and understanding when making statements to others.

This is in contrast to 'You' statements that tend to promote an atmosphere of conflict by sounding accusatory, judgmental and threatening to others.

Whether officers are criticising the individuals' actions or disagreeing with them, the difference between getting co-operation or resistance can often be based on what pronoun is used, 'I' or 'you'.

I or You

'You' negatives

- Sounds accusatory
- Sounds judgmental
- Sounds threatening.

'I' benefits

- Takes 100% responsibility
- Promotes co-operation and understanding
- Lessens the threat to a higher authority.

Officers may be able to avoid conflicts such as communication failures, misunderstandings and personality clashes by using 'I' instead of 'you' language.

Officers may find that individuals may be more likely to pay attention to the substance of what the officer says, instead of reacting negatively to the style in which the officer says it.

Manipulation

In confrontational situations manipulation is a common way for individuals and officers to accomplish results.

Generally, people may not be aware of their manipulation tactics and their manipulation may be habitual or even subconscious.

Officers should be aware that there are four primary ways in which people manipulate each other which can be used negatively in a confrontational environment:

- **intimidation**
- **sympathy**
- **guilt**
- **flattery.**

Positive manipulation approaches include:

- **support**
- **promises**
- **empathy.**

The difference between positive and negative manipulation often depends on whether the officer or individual has the other person's best interest at heart or just their own, and whether they are acting with a sense of fairness and consideration for the others' rights to make free choices.



Five-Step Communication Model

The following five-step appeal model offers a valuable means of final approach in cases of resistance whereby individuals are given every chance to comply with the officer's requests. This in effect is mediation and it is the officer's role to give the individual a fresh personal view of the situation from their own perspective.

Let the individual say what they want, as long as they do what the officer wants.

Step 1 Simple appeal

Ask the individual to comply with the officer's request. Some members of the public will respond to a direct request from a police officer.

Step 2 Reasoned appeal

Explain why the request has been made, what law if any has been broken, and what conduct has caused the request.

Step 3 Personal appeal

This may remind the individual that they may be jeopardising values that are high priorities to them such as:

- the loss of free time if arrested or while in court or imprisonment
- the loss of money to pay travelling expenses or court fines, costs, etc
- the loss of income and prestige of their employment

- the possibility of a criminal record and its potential impact upon future job applications
- the loss of respect of their partner and family.

Officers may need to think for the individual, and create and present certain options for them.

Step 4 Final appeal

At this stage individuals have confirmed their resistance to the officer's requests. The officer should now finally tell them what is required and use a phrase that means the same as the following example:

"Is there anything I can reasonably do to make you co-operate with me/us?"

Step 5 Action

Reasonable force may be the only option left in a case of continued resistance. The option that the officer may choose will be based upon the threat that they perceive. To find out more see the Conflict Management, Use of Force and Personal Management Modules.

It may also be necessary to record the events. For further information see the Use of Force Module Reporting and Monitoring.



**GO TO: MODULE 02:
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**



**GO TO: MODULE 03:
USE OF FORCE**



**GO TO: MODULE 05:
PERSONAL MANAGEMENT**

CUDSA

CUDSA is an acronym that represents a systematic method for managing conflict using negotiation:

Confront

the behaviour

Confront the behaviour

This requires the officer to be assertive in being able to state their request. It is important to address the behaviour and try to enlist the other parties' co-operation to solve the problem.

Understand

each other's position

Understand each other's position

Clarify whether you have a real conflict or a series of misunderstandings. Take time to allow each person to outline their perspective of the situation. Demonstrate respect for the person and show that you are willing to try to understand and resolve the situation.

Define

the problem

Define the problem

Often the most obvious issues in a conflict situation are symptomatic of a more fundamental cause. Definition of the root problem will address the issue at source rather than only addressing the surface issues. This may include splitting issues and dealing with them individually.

Seek

solutions

Seeks solutions

Collectively search for possible solutions to the problem. Don't dismiss any option at this stage!

Agree

way forward

Agree way forward

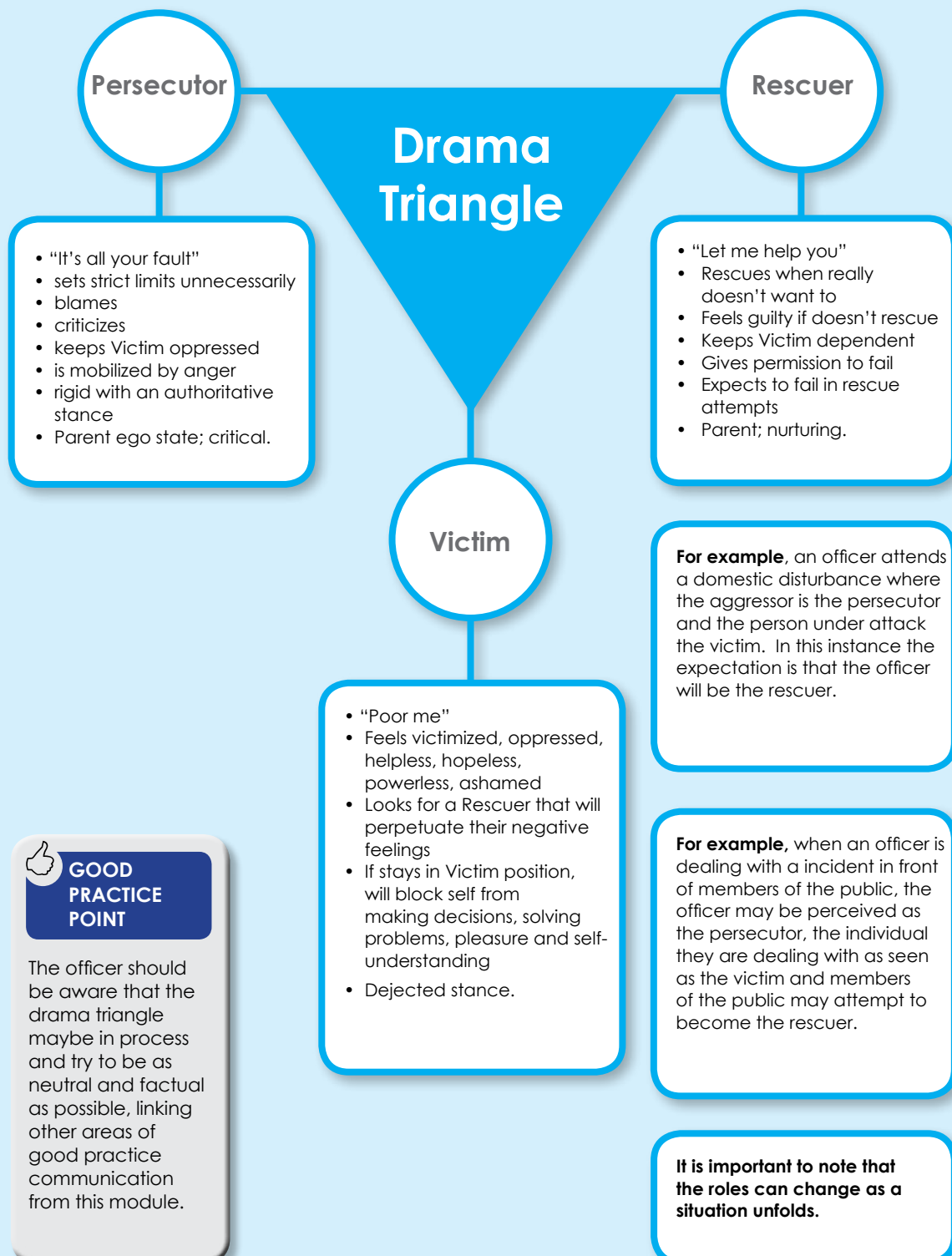
The final stage should be an agreement between those involved in order to move forward. To achieve this, the possible solutions need to be evaluated and the agreed solution implemented. If a perceived win/win outcome is agreed this may be the ultimate outcome, however this may not always be possible.

Drama Triangle

The drama triangle is a psychological model of human interaction first described by Stephen Karpman in his 1968 article "Fairy Tales and Script Drama Analysis". This model can help to explain some of the relationships that an officer will witness, and be part of, in a variety of

contexts during their operational duty. The drama triangle involves three roles; the persecutor, the victim and the rescuer.

Note: If anyone in this triangle changes roles, the other two roles change also.



Ancillary Communication Skills

The following skills support the bulk of this section and provide officers with additional points for consideration.

Commentary Work

During police driver training, when officers get behind the wheel of a police vehicle under instruction they are required to give a running commentary about everything that is happening around them. This systematically takes into account 360° awareness, both outside and inside the vehicle. With practice, this forces the driver to look well ahead instead of looking just in front of the bonnet thereby seeing hazards early and dealing with them effectively.

In personal safety terms, it is also important to read the situation early in order to make appropriate decisions. The greatest benefit of a talking commentary is that officers are not distracted from the task in hand. Maintaining this focus prevents the officer from thinking about issues that are not relevant to the matter in hand. Without commentary, officers may give the impression of being focused but their mind might be elsewhere. All ancillary, superfluous thoughts are excluded in favour of talking commentary.

With practice, talking commentary becomes habit-forming and can be a key to permanent awareness at a subliminal, subconscious level. That is, officers are able to carry out their role whilst unconsciously maintaining awareness of what is going on around them.

For example, an officer conducts a conversation but at the same time is operating the colour code system.

This principle can be applied in a training environment to a scenario or video footage to enhance the benefit of commentary work.

Multi-Officer Communication

When attempting to control individuals, the process of communication can be unprofessionally destroyed when officers talk over each other. It is very easy to ruin an individual officer's rapport with a subject by another officer interrupting at a crucial time.

Alternatively, it may assist an officer who is failing to verbally persuade an individual and needs rescuing.

Be aware that in attempting to rescue an officer (the victim) from the individual (the persecutor) the rescuing officer may become the focus of attention as highlighted earlier in the module and perhaps be perceived as the persecutor themselves.

In an effort to prevent this happening, the use of the clock system of positioning may be helpful. The contact (communicating officer) generally stands at the 12 o'clock position and may communicate with the individual. If another officer intervenes or if the individual decides to talk to another officer, then that officer will assume the 12 o'clock position.

Additionally, multi officer communication can be used to gain tactical advantage when attempting to misdirect the attention of an individual.

Crisis Communication

Occasionally officers may need to use loud, repetitive, verbal commands as a means of controlling the individual.

To find out more:



GO TO: **MODULE 06:**
PERSONAL MANAGEMENT



It is important to realise that simple language with short phrases should be used as a determined individual or non-English speaking individual may fail to understand complicated messages. Similarly, the officer may not be able to physiologically mouth complicated words due to the stress of the situation.

Whilst crisis communication will be naturally heard by subjects it also assists in:

- alerting colleagues
- enabling witnesses to corroborate with what an officer was saying/shouting
- breaking through any auditory barriers that the subject(s) may have
- increasing the justification for use of force by the officer(s)
- gaining control if commands are not complied with.

Before physical engagement

- **“Stop”**
- **“Get back”**
- **“Stay back”**

There may be similar derivatives that officers personally use.

During the encounter

Physical actions take priority, therefore it may be impossible to shout while the officer is physically exerted. However, if possible, clear messages should be given, such as:

- **“Stop fighting”**
- **“Stop resisting”**
- **“Stop kicking”**

Following the encounter when control has been achieved

At this stage it is important for the officers to de-escalate their level of response. This may be achieved by paralinguistic's such as lowering the volume of speech and reassuring the individuals. In this regard, officers may use phrases similar to:

- **“Stop struggling”**
- **“Relax, it's all over”**

Officers should also give the individuals information and, where necessary, instructions as to their next steps, such as:

- **“ I'm now going to handcuff you”**
- **“ I'm going to stand you up”**

Such information gives the individual the chance to comply with the officer's requests.

Occasionally, officers who are confronted by individuals who verbally shout and scream at them may momentarily freeze, simply because they cannot believe the ferocity of the barrage of verbal abuse that they are encountering. For Further information see [Fright, Flight, Fight, Posturing, Submission - Personal Management Module.](#)

If this is the case, officers may decide to use aggressive counter-verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

Every officer has a certain degree of aggressive potential, however the real skill is learning how to guide and manage that aggression.

The use of assertion skills gained from quality personal safety training may guide officers, not only through potentially hostile situations but also through minor irritations. In turn, assertiveness may lift an officer's spirits and preserve their self-esteem.

Establishing self-esteem is an important by-product of personal safety and nowhere is that more important than in the operational arena.

Although some officers may be pacifist by nature, there may be some situations when they must change that nature very quickly.

If officers present themselves assertively then some individuals may not want to persist with the confrontation, however that does not mean that all individuals will comply.

Aggressive verbal and non-verbal communication often precedes loss of physical control by the individual(s). For the untrained officer who may be emotionally 'disarmed' this can be dangerous, however for the assertively trained officer this can present an opportunity.

During this period of verbal/nonverbal attack, the officer may use this window of opportunity and be pre-emptive or possibly escape from the situation.

Alternatively, officers may reply verbally with submissive or aggressive counter-verbal.

This may turn the situation around

in favour of the officer both in time, and ultimately control, so that it is the individual who experiences the denial stage and is disarmed.

However, officers should similarly be aware of the individual who has mentally rehearsed what to say and what to do, in a pre-meditated and cold, clinical fashion.

Note:

For additional information on the subjects covered in this Module follow the links below:



GO TO: MODULE 03:
USE OF FORCE



GO TO: MODULE 09:
INCAPACITANTS



GO TO: MODULE 05:
PERSONAL MANAGEMENT



GO TO: MODULE 10:
BATONS



GO TO: MODULE 07:
UNARMED SKILLS



GO TO: MODULE 13:
EDGED WEAPONS



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