



Glossary of Key Communication Terms

Communication

The exchange of a message between two or more people.

- **Expressive Communication** - The process of communicating a message to another person.
- **Receptive Communication** - The process of receiving and understanding a message.

Communication Context

The circumstances in which communication occurs.

- Physical environment (e.g., lighting, noise level)
- Individual characteristics (e.g., personality, characteristics associated with a specific disability)
- Activities and routines (determine the range of possible messages and opportunities to communicate)
- Communication partners (e.g., who they are, their communication skills, how they behave)
- Process of communication (how the conversation is initiated, carried out, and ended)

Communication Form

Refers to the method of communication.

Examples:

- Formal language
 - Speech
 - Sign language (e.g., American Sign Language)
 - Written language
 - Braille
- Other forms of communication
 - Gestures
 - Body language
 - Non-speech vocalizations

Communication Function

The reason or purpose for a message.

Intentional Communication

Communication that is done with the purpose of sending a message and being understood. Intentional communication does not always have a conventional form, but it is something that can be understood by another person.

Meaning

The intended meaning or content of the message itself. This is easy to identify when the form of communication is formal language (e.g., spoken, written, or signed), but may be difficult with other forms of communication (e.g., gestures, non-speech vocalizations).

Sensory Mode

The sensory channel or channels that are being used for a particular communication form (e.g. tactual sign language uses the sense of touch).

Turn Exchanges

This simply means taking turns while communicating. A quality interaction always has at least three turns.

References

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