Perception

I Know what I saw, what I heard, what I felt.....The facts are the facts!

What is it?

• The process by which we become aware of objects, people, and events through use of our senses.
• It is an active process—not passive.
• Why is it important to Interpersonal Communication? It influences your communication choices. Some feel it is the heart of our communication.

The Process

• Selection/Stimulation
• Organization
• Interpretation

Selection/Stimulation

• We are stimulated by many elements in our environment (music, T.V. ads, smell of perfume, a friend's touch).
• We are exposed to more input than we can manage—therefore we select which stimuli we will take in.
What influences our selection?

- Intense messages (loud, large, bright).
- Repetitious messages (commercials we hear over and over).
- Past experiences
- Communication with others

Organization

- After selecting, we must then arrange the stimuli in a way that is meaningful to us—so that we can understand it.
- Place stimuli in Groups by generalizing. (Proximity, Similarity, Closure)

Interpretation

- After selecting and organizing, we begin to interpret the perceptions in a way that makes sense to us.
- What did the message really mean?
  (Examples: "Call any time!" or A simple wink—what does it mean?)

What influences our perceptions?

- Physiological (hunger/fatigue)
- Psychological (mood)
- Cultural (how we differ culturally)
- Social (gender/occupational roles)
Perception

How can it get us into Trouble?

Stereotyping

• When we OVER generalize to save time or energy or thinking about it
• We assume that our perceptions always correct
• We do not take the time to hear, see, feel the individual—just the group.

What are some forms of Stereotyping

• According to:
  • Gender
  • Race
  • Roles
  • Religion

How can it help us?

• Know that there is very little reality in our communication--
• Do not have to have your perceptions always be right—check for accuracy
• Develop you senses—sight, touch, smell, hearing to interpret perceptions—be aware