

Barriers to effective communication critical essay

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



This paper will discuss the process of communication and its components. The differences between listening and hearing within communication will be reviewed. Formal and informal channels of communication will be described and the different barriers between effective communications will be assessed. Lastly, strategies that may be implemented to overcome communication barriers will be examined. The process of communication can be described within five steps.

The five steps of the communication process include: transmitting an idea, sending the idea, receiving the message, understanding the message and providing feedback to the sender (Wallace & Roberson, 2009). Transmitting an idea involves the development of a thought or thoughts and then a need to divulge the information to another person is conceived. Sending the idea is the way in which the thought is transmitted from one person to the next. This could be done verbally, in writing or by portraying an action to someone else.

The intended party must then confirm receipt of the message. If this does not occur then the transmittal of the message could be unsuccessful. Receipt of the message also falls on the responsibility of the sender. The sender should ensure proper transmittal of the message to the intended recipient. Comprehension of the message is the sender's ability to send a clear and concise message to the receiver. The message needs to be understood by the receiver in order for there to be a proper flow of communication. Feedback can occur in written form or verbally from the receiver.

The receiver of the message will provide the sender with an acknowledgement that the intended message was understood or needs further clarification. The process of communication is two-fold and requires responses from both a sender and a receiver in order for it to work properly. Listening and hearing are two different matters when it comes to communication. Hearing is something that happens naturally and we hear things all day. There is no concentration or thought process involved to hear something. Listening requires a thought and concentration. To listen to something is to actually process in our brain what is being heard or read.

Listening requires one to hear, but hearing does not require you to listen (Dunn, 2004). Intended communications can be misconstrued when the intended receiver only hears the message instead of listening to the message. Within the criminal justice organization there are formal and informal channels of communication. Formal channels of communication consist of a clear and concise method to ensure messages are transmitted from one person to the next. This type of communication channel typically funnels from the top down, meaning from the boss to the employees.

Formal communication in criminal justice includes memorandums, reports, orders and/or regulations. This helps to keep a set standard, organization within a unit and uniformity. There are also disadvantages to a formal channel of communication. The disadvantages consist of this process being time consuming and tedious. Because of the long process, a formal communication process cannot always keep up with things that change often. A formal process can also hinder ideas and thoughts from being

transmitted because some people lack the skill or the drive to follow through with such a formal and long process.

The informal channel of communication is “ office gossip” or idle office chatter. This allows for information to travel from the employees to the boss in a funnel up theory. This will also allow for employees to discuss information amongst themselves without being in a formal setting or doing formal reports. Informal lines of communication significantly decreases the time it takes to receive an answer rather than doing up a formal report, sending it for signature and waiting for a response back. Questions and answers can be achieved within a matter of minutes via informal channels of communication.

Barriers within the communication process exist when one person is concerned with personal or professional status (Wallace & Roberson, 2009). There are four different types of barriers that exist within this process and they are: emotional, physical, semantic and ineffective listening barriers. Emotional barriers are when people use their past or present experiences to form a message or decode a message. Self-esteem is at the root of emotional barriers; those with low self-esteem will not transmit many messages for fear of rejection and those with high self-esteem may try to impress their own ideas onto others. Physical barriers are any physical interruptions when trying to transmit a message. This could be equipment malfunctions, distance, or strict rules and regulations requiring certain steps be followed before transmitting any information. Semantic barriers are those words or phrases that can be interpreted differently depending on the person

receiving the message. A phrase can be said to mean one thing and three different people could interpret it to mean three different things.

Ineffective listening is the fourth barrier that could exist in the criminal justice system. Ineffective listening is the inability to clearly listen to a message and interpret what was being said or read. This could be due to distraction, boredom, fatigue, stressor a failure to connect with the speaker. Barriers to communication hinder the process because it stops the flow of communication from one person to the next. There are ways to overcome communication barriers within the criminal justice system. One way to overcome the barriers is to provide feedback.

Feedback keeps the listener involved and lets the speaker know you are paying attention and that you understand what is being said. One can overcome emotional barriers by trying to distress before coming onto the job. Leaving emotional baggage out of the office and trying to stay focused on work at work can help to overcome the emotional barrier. Using certain tones to convey messages can defeat a semantic barrier. Tones in one's voice can help to portray different messages in different ways. Facial and nonverbal expressions can also help to overcome semantic barriers in communication.

In order to improve listening skills requires practice. In order to effectively listen to a message there has to be a need to know. Listening skills are something that everyone can always improve on and this only comes from practice. Effective communication within the criminal justice system is imperative to everyone involved. By learning the barriers and strategies to

reduce the barriers we can improve on both transmitting and receiving messages. Communication is key in every facet of life and the criminal justice system depends on it.