

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION IN CLINICAL SUPERVISION

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WHY ADDRESS COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION?

- ***Counselor educators & supervisors must recognize that supervisees have varying levels of communication competence/efficacy and unique communication skill sets, styles, and deficits.***
- These competencies, styles, etc. can influence a) **effectiveness** of communication, b) **amount** of communication, c) **desire** for communicating (Richmond & McCroskey, 1998)
- Many don't realize how common CA is in the general population.
- Considered a **“hidden”** communication disorder because it's not easily recognized, acknowledged, or discussed.
- High CA individuals more likely to withdraw from communicating and less likely to be skilled communicators (Allend & Bourhis, 1996).
- High CA is linked w/ reduced willingness to communicate and self-perceived communication competence (Mansson & Myers, 2009; Teven, Richmond, McCroskey, & McCroskey, 2010).

COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

Communication Apprehension

An individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (McCroskey, 1977)

Domains

Public Speaking

Dyadic Interaction

Small Groups

Large Groups

Anticipated aspect of CA is especially notable given the anticipatory anxiety can be as real as the actual interaction.

TERMS ASSOCIATED W/ C-A

- **Reticence:** Idea we will lose more than gain by talking vs. staying silent
- **Shyness:** Discomfort, inhibition, & awkwardness in social situations-particularly with unfamiliar people.
- **Social Anxiety:** “Marked fear or anxiety about one or more social situations in which the individual is exposed to possible scrutiny from others”. (APA, 2013)
- **Social Communicative Anxiety (S-CA):** General term used by C-A researchers that encompasses above terms w/out bias.

CA: NOT JUST FOR SUPERVISEES!

Instructors can experience high CA, too!

- Student evaluations
- Upset/aggressive students
- Highly extroverted students (with & without good behaviors &/or communication skills)
- Tripping and/or running into a table or chair in class.

Example of High CA Supervisors (from business literature)

- Authors note that, overall, supervisor CA is more important than employee CA with regard to the overall amount of information provided.
- High supervisor CA was negatively related to job and organization load. In other words, employees are deprived of important information.

On the other hand....

- Higher employee CA was positively related to job and organization load. In other words, the higher the employee CA, the more likely they experienced information overload regardless of the information the supervisor provided.

ETIOLOGY OF COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

- Early view considered *social learning theory/situational approach* as a conceptual base, but later studies showed it accounted for minimal variance. Led to view of *biological factors/genetic* as key (McCroskey, 2010).
- Still, not full agreement on genetic nature of CA.
- Beatty et al. (1998) suggest 80% is genetic; Others (e.g., Jang et al, 1998) cite influence of environment.
- Others theories on CA development:
 - *Multi-Causal* approach: includes *genetic & environmental* factors (Condit, 2000);
 - *Component* approach: CA is result of interaction between one's self-perception of communication competence, negative evaluation, and motivation in a situation. (Ayres, 1997)

COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

- Some view C-A as an inherent ***“trait”*** that rarely fluctuates (McCrosky, 1986); Others view C-A as ***“state”/situation*** (Rubin, 1982).
- ***Approach-Avoidance continuum*** is a central concept.
 - Strong Avoidance.....Strong Desire to communicate
 - Extreme Introversion.....Extreme Extroversion
- ***C-A may manifest:***
 - In formal/uncomfortable/novel situations;
 - When one is in a minority (i.e., cultural/socioeconomic) or subordinate (i.e., work/supervisee/student) role.
 - When one feels conspicuous or is being evaluated (even by peers you like).
 - When one has prior history experiences (including school & higher education)
 - When one is or feels dissimilar to others.

PERSONAL REPORT OF COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

(PRCA-24; MCCROSKEY, 1984)

- Most widely used C-A instrument.
- High reliability ($\alpha > .90$) & high predictive validity.
- Provides overall score of C-A and sub-scores in 4 contexts:
 - Public Speaking
 - Dyadic interaction
 - Small groups
 - Large groups

Example Questions

1. I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions.
2. I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.
3. I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.
4. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in conversations.

CA & CULTURAL DYNAMICS

Culture in which one is socialized influences communication style/patterns (Gudykunst, 1997), specifically the **degree of individualism/collectivism** within the culture.

Intercultural C-A

- “The fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with people from different groups, especially cultural and/or ethnic groups (Neuliep & McCroskey, 2006, p. 26).
- Strong support for notion that culture influences CA levels and dynamics (Christophel, 1996, Kim, Aune, Hunte, Kim, & Kim, 2001; McCroskey, Burroughs, Daun, & Richmond, 1990)

Cultural factors linked to Communication Apprehension

- 1. Race** (Jordan-Jackson & Davis, 2005)
 - Past research indicate differences in communication patterns and styles between Blacks and Whites (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1987)
 - Other research found Black and White women changed their behavior, focus, and attitudes when communicating in homogeneous vs. heterogeneous groups (Booth-Butterfield & Jordan, 1989).
 - Black men and white men show significant differences on CA in dyadic groups only, suggesting that communication anxieties are highest in “one-on-one” settings. (Jackson & Davis, 2005).
- 2. Individual vs. Collectivist cultures** (e.g., U.S./Western cultures vs. Asian Cultures) (Hackman & Barthel-Hackman, 1993; Hsu, 2007; Pederson, Tkachuk, & Allen, 2008)
- 3. High-context vs. Low-Context cultures** (Korea, Japan, China vs. U.S.) (Merkin, 2009; Pederson et al., 2008)
- 4. Lifestyle differences** (urban, suburban, rural) (Hackman & Barthel-Hackman, 1993)
- 5. “Self-Construal” levels** (see next slide) (Hsu, 2004)
- 6. Oral communication training protocols** (Dwyer, 2000; Robinson, 1997).....(“Social Learning approach”)
 1. Cultural differences in emphasis on oral communication training. More formalized in U.S. and England (Andrew, 1996) than Finland & Germany.
 2. Limited formalized oral communication training outside the U.S. Some U.S. training specifically addresses CA (Robinson, 1997).
 3. Less formalized attention to oral communication could facilitate higher CA

ROLE OF INDIVIDUALISM & COLLECTIVISM

- Differences in CA can be linked to differences in cultural levels of individualism & collectivism (Kim et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2001).
- **Individualism-collectivism** framework has been used to explain communication differences across cultures. (Gudykunst, 1997)
 - **Individualism**—emphasizes views/needs/goal of ind.
 - **Collectivism**—emphasizes views/needs/goal of grp.
- Meta-analysis of cultural orientation (Oyeserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002) found:
 - Over 83 studies, Euro-Americans were more individualistic (value personal independence) and less collectivistic oriented than other ethnic groups in the U.S.

CA & “SELF-CONSTRUAL”

For Supervisors:

- **Self-construal** is an individual level construct of individualism-collectivism and refer to how one experiences their thoughts, feelings, and actions in relation to others.
- Those possessing “**independent self-construal**” view oneself as unique, distinct, and autonomous from others and thus are often motivated by internal thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and actions instead of those of others.
 - **Main goals:** be unique, strive for their own goals, express themselves, and be communicate in a direct manner with others.
- Those possessing the “**interdependent self-construal**” view one’s behavior as motivated to maintain harmony with others, with behaviors more aligned with caring about the needs, wants, and feelings of others.
 - **Main goals:** fit in with the group, act according to group norms, stay in one’s “place”, and promote group goals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991)

SUPERVISION IMPLICATIONS (CONT.)

INDEPENDENT SELF-CONSTRUAL CORRELATES

Positive Correlates

- Regard for clarity in conversation (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim, & Heyman, 1996)
- Openness in communication (Gudykunst et al., 1996)

Negative Correlates

- Embarrassibility (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995)
- **Fear of negative evaluation** (Okazaki, 1997)
- Social Anxiety (Okazaki, 1997)
- **Communication Apprehension** (Hsu, 2002)

INTERDEPENDENT SELF-CONSTRUAL CORRELATES

Correlates

- Concern for others feelings (Gudykunst et al. 1996)
- Concern for avoiding negative evaluation
- Embarrassibility
- **Communication Apprehension**

CORRELATES OF SOCIAL-COMMUNICATIVE ANXIETY

Developmental

Personality

Social

Behavioral

DEVELOPMENTAL CORRELATES

- Once anxiety is established w/in the individual, those high in anxiety avoid contexts where communication is or might be required. When involved, response is anxiousness.
 - People low in anxiety seek out & enjoy situations that demand communication.
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Genetic Predisposition

- Evidence suggests **mix of biological** (Eley et al., 2003), **cultural** (Hackman & Barthel-Hackman, 1993), & **socioeconomic factors** (Chesebro, Lawrence, & Bennett, 1992).
- Anxiety can be moderated (i.e., skills training, cognitive modification, etc...)

Reinforcement

- Operant conditioning is partly at work here.

Skills Acquisition

- High S-CA linked with children w/ less developed social and communication skills.
 - I.E.: popular children are more socially skilled than unpopular peers & the availability of multiple social stimulations is + related to social skills development & lower C-A (Van Kleek & Daly, 1982)

Modeling.... Parents of high S-CA children reported as being more socially isolated (Bruch, 1989)

PERSONALITY CORRELATES (CONT.)

Higher S-CA individuals, the *less inclined* toward...

- Self-disclosure
- Willingness to elicit self-disclosure (Miller, Berg, & Archer, 1983)
- Conversational sensitivity & complexity (Daly, Vangelisti, & Daughton, 1987; Daly et al, 1985)
- Self-monitoring (Briggs & Cheek, 1988).....Social skills (Segrin & Flora, 2000)
- Social responsiveness, attentiveness, & perceptiveness (Cegala, Savage, Bruner, & Conrad, 1982)

High S-CA was positively related to....

- Classroom apprehension (Olaniran & Roach, 1994)
- Embarrassibility & tendency to blush (Leary & Meadows, 1991)
- Fear of negative evaluation (Leary & Meadows, 1991).
- Being viewed negatively or less socially attractive
- Being viewed as less extroverted and composed.
- Being perceived as less credible.

PERSONALITY CORRELATES

Gender Differences....minimal effect

Self-Esteem...Higher the reported S-CA, lower the reported Self=Esteem (Hamilton, 1972; Schmidt & Fox, 1995)

- **Self-identity** can be affected as “individuals with high C-A levels are less likely to communicate with others, more likely to have low levels of perceived communication competence, and are more likely to avoid communicative situations resulting in increased apprehension levels.

Social.....Higher the S-CA level, less socially oriented.

- High C-A individuals **are less likely** to communicate with others, **more likely** to have low levels of perceived communication competence, **and more likely** to avoid communication situations that could trigger greater C-A. (McCroskey & McCroskey, 2002, p. 19).

Other key personality correlates of S-CA

- Intolerance of ambiguity (Lashbrook, Lashbrook, Bacon, & Salinger, 1979)
- Lower resilience (Glaser, Butler, & Pryor, 1998)
- High C-A college students had **fewer social interactions & close relationships** with peers and faculty and were less positive about the college environment (McCroskey & Sheahan, 1978).

SOCIAL CORRELATES

Key Outcomes:

1. Perceptions/judgment of others.
2. Self-rating of one's anxiety level

Higher S-CA people...

- Trust others less (Ayres, 1989).....Find communication less satisfying (Ayres, 1989)
- Frame affect more negatively (Pozo, Carver, Wellens, & Scheier, 1991)....View others as less attractive (Ayres, 1989)
- More concerned about being evaluated than those with low or moderate S-CA.

Work Setting...

- Higher C-A subordinates are more likely to view supervisors dominant & coercive....&.... Overall, less satisfaction with work and supervision (Falcione, McCroskey, & Daly, 1977).

Classroom Setting...

- High S-CA student, less attentive to eye contact /patterns (Andersen & Coussoule, 1980).
 - High apprehensive **Teachers** more likely to discriminate between students in low vs. high interaction seats in class. (i.e., front/back of room).

Group Setting

- high apprehensive people perceive greater status among members vs. low S-CA.

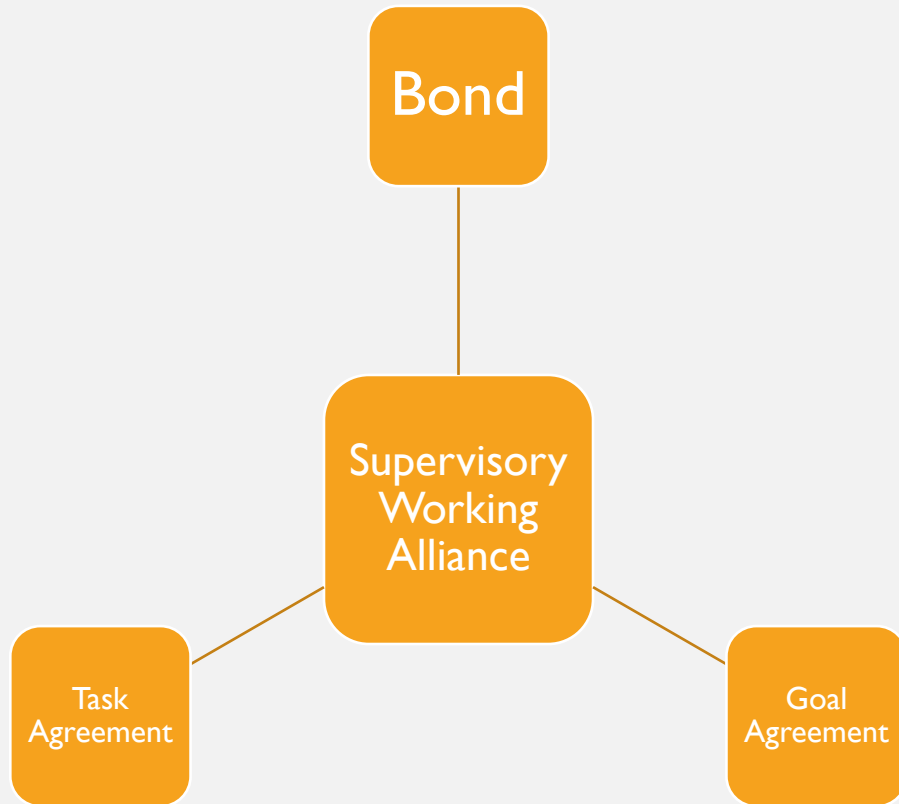
BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF HIGH CA

Behavioral correlates (cont.)

1. ***Higher levels of physiological arousal*** (per heart rate/blood pressure) (Addison & Schmidt, 1999; Nahshoni et al., 2004)
2. ***Maintain less eye contact*** (Daly, Vagnelisti, & Lawrence, 1989).
3. ***Fidgeting....offer less firm handshakes....***
4. ***Lean away/ less positive affect*** (Brugoon & Koper, 1983).
5. ***Prefer traditional classrooms*** over more socially interactive (McCroskey & McVetta, 1978)
6. Select seats in a classroom/home that involve ***fewer communication demands*** (McCrosky & Sheahan, 1978).
7. ***Talk less frequently***(Ayres, 1989)...***particularly when anxious about evaluations*** (Depaulo, Epstein, & Lemay, 1990) OR perceives context as unsafe/non-supportive (Neer & Kirchner, 1989).
8. ***Avoid discussions/interactions****

*May ask questions after class, rarely voluntarily respond, wait for others to ask questions, borrow notes, won't interrupt or take one's "turn" answering a question or leading discussion.

SUPERVISORY WORKING ALLIANCE



Resistance

Attachment Style

Shame

Anxiety

Competence Concerns

Transference

SUPERVISION IMPLICATIONS

- “Communication is the heart and soul of the counseling profession, yet, too often, communication among site supervisor, the intern, and the [training] program get garbled”
(Roberts et al., 2001, p. 211, as cited in Bernard & Goodyear, 2014).
- Communication between graduate program & site(s) considered as foundational task in supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014).
 - Between training program & site supervisor (parameters of site/internship, grievances/due process, etc.)
 - Between site supervisor & counselor trainee (formative & summative evaluations; grievances, etc.)
 - Between training program supervisor & trainee (i.e., feedback from discussion w/ site supervisor; formative/summative evals)
- Poor communication, which should be avoided, could cause unnecessary conflict and distance between a program and site (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014).

CONFLICT W/IN THE SUPERVISORY ALLIANCE

- Effective communication is vital during evaluation feedback—poor communication makes supervisory alliances vulnerable to conflict (Robiner, Fuhurman, & Ristvedt, 1993) and ethical concerns (Ladany, Lehrman-Waterman, et al., 1999).
- **Burke, Goodyear, & Guzzardo (1998)**
 - Burke, Goodyear, and Guzzardo's (1998) study of weakening-repair process w/in supervision found that the more affect-arousing and difficult to repair weakenings in the alliance occurred as supervisors assumed **evaluative roles**.
- **Safran & Muran (2000)**
 - Suggested appropriate contexts for using **direct** (address rationale for an intervention) and **indirect interventions** (addresses key tasks/goals vs. underlying conflict) with supervisees when there is conflict/disagreement between supervisor/supervisor.

SUPERVISEE ANXIETY

Supervisee Anxiety:

- Anxiety affects supervisee learning, performance, quality of engagement w/supervisor.
- Supervisee anxiety levels can impact how much they disclose (Hess et al., 2008).
- Skovholt and Ronnestad (1992) found high anxiety among graduate students, but were less able to access it than w/ more seasoned therapists.
- Several studies suggest tendency of supervisees to withhold information from supervisor due to impression management (Ladany et al., 1996).

How to address supervisee anxiety:

- Build/maintain strong supervisory alliance.
- Tell students it is ok to take risks and make mistakes (Borders, 2009).
- Balance support & challenge.
- Provide structure to supervision (Freeman, 1993)
- Role induction (decrease uncertainty about role/performance). (Monks, 1996).

SUPERVISEE RESISTANCE & COMPETENCE

Supervisee Resistance

- “To frame any supervisee behavior as resistance risks blaming the supervisee for what can be healthy response to perceived threat.” (Liddle, 1986)
- Supervisors who adopt the notion that supervisees as resistance “can blind him or her to other causes for the supervisee’s resistant behavior, including possible roles they may be playing to elicit it” (Beutler, Moleiro, & Talebi, 2002).
- What triggers supervisee resistance?
 - Supervisor Style
 - Supervisor Focus
 - Supervisee Developmental level
 - Agreement on goals/tasks

Supervisee Competence

- No surprise, supervisees want to feel competent (has developmental flavor).
- Consider “self-efficacy”, or one’s belief about an ability to be successful at a certain objective (Bandura, 1994).
- Consider a high CA individual’s struggle w/communication competence/efficacy.

LESSONS FROM THE LITERATURE: TRAINING PROGRAM/SITES

- In service supervision training for site supervisors are key element in establishing & keeping positive communication between training program & site (supervisors). (Roberts et al., 2000; Beck, Yager, Williams, Williams, & Morris, 1989).
- Site supervisors need to communicate with sites regarding concerns about student performance (Igartua, 2000) and training program must be receptive to this communication;
 - Peleg-Oren & Even-Zahav (2004) found that a key reason for a site terminating relationship with training programs was *frustration over poor communication with training program*.
- Training program supervisor has responsibility to create evaluation plan and communicate clearly with sites regarding their evaluation responsibility (Bogo et al., 2007).
- Site supervisors need to act as a liaison between supervisee & their agency (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004).

COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION & THE CLASSROOM

Students w/higher C-A vs. students with lower C-A...

- less motivated to study (Frymier, 1993)
 - Earned lower grades
 - more avoidant of social contact
 - Limited their occupational choices (Hurt & Preiss, 1978)
 - scored lower on SAT than students with lower C-A students...and lower GPAs. (McCroskey & Anderson, 1976)
 - Performed worse in basic courses & on performance assignments (Powers & Smythe, 1980)
 - More negative attitudes toward school & final grades (Hurt & Preiss, 1978).
 - May overcompensate and become hyperv verbal.
-
- **Both teachers** (Smyth & Powers, 1978) **and peers** (Hurt & Preiss, 1978) **formed more negative perceptions about high apprehensive potential for + academic & social outcomes.**

CLASSROOM & TRAINING IMPLICATIONS

- **C-A is linked to retention, grade point average, and classroom participation & academic achievement** (McCroskey & Sheahan, 1978; Phillips, Smith, Modaff, & Morgan, 2003).
- In the classroom, high and low C-A students reported same interest and motivation to learn, but high C-A students did not want to be active participants in the course. (Kelsey, 2010).
- College students w/ high C-A may avoid meeting with instructors or joining study groups to avoid communication as much as possible (McCroskey & Sheahan, 1978).
- Compared to low C-A students, high C-A students tend to sit where they perceive the least amount of communication will occur. (McCroskey & Sheahan, 1978).
- High C-A individuals who experience significant emotional distress when anticipating and/or during communication scenarios with others perceive themselves-and are perceived by others- as less competent, skilled, and successful (McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, & Payne, 1989).
- **High C-A individuals are perceived as less credible & attractive vs. those with low C-A.**
- **Familiarity with the communication partner played a role in the level of communication apprehension experienced** (Harris, Sawyer, and Behnke, 2006).

INTERVENTIONS

USE OF SUPERVISION MODELS

- Supervisory Working Alliance Model (Bordin, 1983)
- Integrated Developmental Model
- Discrimination Model

(Some) Considerations

Supervisor/supervisee awareness of CA/veracity of the construct

How the models are applied. (supervisor tendencies, etc.)

Supervisor & Supervisee levels of CA (& overall dynamics)

Cultural or ethical dynamics

Supervisor training/developmental level

C-A INTERVENTIONS

I. Skills Training

Skills Training

- Cognitive restructuring
 - Systematic desensitization
 - Visualization
 - Implement teaching strategies that directly address lack of knowledge about CA (Social Learning/situational approach) (Hsu, 2010).
- Integrate skills training throughout curriculum/training so student can utilize skills in different counseling contexts (Oudejans, 2008; Gardner, Milne, String, & Whiting, 2005).
 - Instructor's recognition of possible high C-A students and individualized attention to address the C-A vs. simply assigning a project/group assignment that would require them to “get over it” as it may have the opposite effect (McCroskey, 1984).
- ## II. Increase self-esteem
- Non-threatening speaking activities (i.e., ungraded role plays, etc..).
 - Encourage students to choose activities/topics they feel comfortable.

- Cognitive restructuring, systematic desensitization, & visualization (Bodie, 2010; Bourhis, 2006; McCroskey, 1984; Stanga & Ladd, 1990).

INTERVENTIONS

Imagined Interactions (II's) (Honeycutt, Choi, & DeBerry, 2009)

Imagined interactions are defined as “the process of social cognition whereby actors imagine and therefore indirectly experience themselves in anticipated and/or past communicative encounters with others” (Honeycutt, 2003, p. 2).

Challenge:

- Ayers (1998) found that high CA's avoid preparing, use minimal verbal and nonverbal communication, and avoid thinking about interviews.
 - **Interpretation:** High CA's have catastrophizing negative thoughts about how a situation will go.

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Questions/Comments

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