

This week, we will be discussing communication and psychological health and well-being, as well as career success. In this forum, you were going to address a common communication issue people have-- communication apprehension.

When you think about communication apprehension, it is important to get to the heart of one's fear. And getting to the heart of this fear often brings us back to the first week, when we discussed self-esteem, self-concept, and self-image. Remember that Bevan and Sole explain that one way people form their self-concept is through self-fulfilling prophecies? Well, it might be the case that we set ourselves up for apprehension, just through the expectations we have of ourselves in various situations.

As you approach the forum this week, think about how you conceptualize an interaction and how what you expect from a situation can lead to anxiety on your part. Would improving your overall self-image be a way to overcome some of these apprehensions? How can you develop confidence in each of the four communication situations mentioned Bevan and Sole and overcome your apprehension?

When you go to answer the questions in the forum, pay close attention to section 5.4 in our course textbook. There, they discuss how you need to understand your needs and develop confidence. How does one do this? Bevan and Sole address the importance of practicing communication competence. What do they mean by this, and how can one practice something they fear?

Finally, Bevan and Sole mention the importance of seeking assistance from others. Do you have someone in your life you can talk to about your communication apprehension? Can you develop a clear way to overcome this fear? More importantly, why is overcoming this fear so important?

When you think about the apprehension you've identified, consider the ways this fear is impacting your professional life. Bevan and Sole discuss the implications of loneliness, difficulties with computer mediated communication, and communication in confidence.

With regard to loneliness, when you have few confidants, it makes us feel disconnected from social networks. This means we have few people we can lean on during bad times or few we can celebrate with when times are good. If you are unwilling to communicate, it can result in isolation and a less satisfying life overall. And if you are incompetent in your communication, alienating others, this can lead to even further isolation. So we constantly need to think through what is appropriate and what we need to have a happy, fulfilled life.

Computer mediated communication offers new opportunities for social connection. However, Bevan and Sole also

explained that those with high levels of communication apprehension are less likely to communicate via computers as well. All of these points can also be connected to our professional communication. The fact is, communication plays a central role in our professional careers. So even if having a large social network is not important to you, you must learn how to be a competent communicator to be successful at work.

How much you are liked can be a factor in hiring and promotional decisions. Keep this in mind as you think through your communication competencies and your apprehensions. Remember, high levels of communication apprehension can be a barrier to being a competent communicator.

People often avoid interactions as it causes anxiety. But what is the source of this avoidance? Do you avoid people because you fear they will judge you based on how you think, speak, or look? Do you assume the worst results in situations, and therefore, do not bother attempting to apply for new positions or challenge yourself in new social or work situations? Does your avoidance of dealing with your communication anxiety allow you to repeatedly avoid practicing some key skills you need to be happy or successful at work?

People get caught in a loop where they feel afraid and then avoid communicating. In this avoidance, they evade the crucial practice that would allow them to overcome this fear. It is a dangerous loop that is hard to escape without directly working on the issue. If you don't practice, you'll never be able to overcome any of these fears or weaknesses in your communication.

Addressing these questions and issues will be key to your success in the forum this week. If you have few stories about apprehension at work, feel free to discuss why you have such high levels of confidence and try to offer advice to others, based on your experience and what you've learned in Bevan and Sole.

The goal here is to illustrate what you've learned in chapter 5, share a story that illustrates what you've learned, and to support each other. So please approach the forum with that in mind. OK. We look forward to reading your responses. And don't be afraid, we are all here to learn from each other, including instructors.