

Five Major Channels of Nonverbal Behaviors

Nonverbal communication is an area of psychology that examines behaviors that allow both the sending and receiving of information. This can provide extra information to verbal communication, and may supplement or negate verbal messages. There are five major channels of nonverbal behaviors that assist in communication. These are paralinguistics, kinesics, proxemics, facial expression and visual behavior.



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Paralanguage

Parachute speech-bubble

Paralanguage is the information conveyed in the vocal, nonverbal aspects of speech, such as yawns, sighs, etc. Furthermore, spoken variables, such as intensity, pitch, tempo, regional accents and speech disturbances are considered paralanguage.

Kinesics

Knee-kicks

Kinesics refers to all discernible bodily movements and gestures, with exception to facial expressions and eye movement. Emphasis gestures are kinesic movements that are directly translatable words, like a wave. Comfort gestures indicate an emotional state and are directed toward the body (a confused person scratching their head). Kinesics also include posture, postural adjustments and movements through space.

Proxemics

Couple hugging in Proximity-bubble

Proxemics are described as the use and structure of space and spatial considerations when interacting with others. Examples of this are having a "space bubble," which can be penetrated by best friends or those in a relationship.

Facial Expression

Facial Expressions

Facial expressions may be the most important channel for nonverbal communication, and are helpful for displaying emotion or mood. This is in part to the intricate muscles of the face allowing for various and distinct facial expressions.

Visual Behavior

Communication through Eye Contact

Visual behavior describes visual interactions signaling involvement with another. Examples of this are looking at someone you are close with or speaking amongst, and averting gaze from somebody who is abnormal. Visual behavior helps convey dominance and power, flirtation and attraction, understanding, puzzlement and feedback.