

**DIGI SCHOOL 2020-1-SK01-KA226-SCH-094350**

**Non-verbal communication - posture**

**The aim of communication**is a process that conveys messages of which purpose is understanding. It has existed in the human community since its beginning.

It is fundamental in common discourse when sharing information, influencing others and reaching some form of understanding. It is an ongoing process, when meeting other people either by coincidence or by chance. It is a life necessity of all individuals as well as organizations and the whole society.

**The most frequent subdivision of communication:**

1. **Verbal communication –** uses words
2. **Non-verbal communication –** using other means than words
3. **Communication using deeds –** effect of deeds

**The importance of non-verbal communication**

In non-verbal communication people express their mental state, feelings, emotions, experience, or thoughts even more accurately and truly than by using words. The way we use our bodies to express ourselves is usually conditioned by our personality and above all by our temperament. It is also dependent on the place we live and the majority of expressions are culturally accustomed. In the process of communication, it is impossible to omit its non-verbal form, it can be only restrained.

There are differences between men and women, children and adults, and different social groups. Our family traditions and the cultural background we originate from is reflected in our outer form of expression. The body language says a lot about our health condition.

We communicate with other people in many forms, verbally as well as non-verbally. Non-verbal communication (the communication without words) can serve a variety of social purposes that can be divided into four groups:

1. helping the speech
2. substituting the speech
3. expressing attitude
4. expressing emotions

Non-verbal communication (communication without words) can be of different importance to us, it can show:

1. Interest in communication – by turning our bodies, facial expression and gesticulation we express the interest in communication
2. We show who we are – when meeting somebody, we create the first impression on behalf of the external features, looks, subconscious factors such as familiarity with us or other people who we know, facial expression, posture.
3. We influence the behaviour of others – we affect others with gestures, with what we are wearing, how we care about our appearance
4. We influence the course of a mutual meeting – non-verbal communication helps us to begin, regulate, and end the personal contact. Most commonly it is the facial expression, posture, and gesticulation.

**Forms of non-verbal communication:**

**Eye contact –** type of look

**Facial expression –** movements of eyes, mouth, facial muscles

**Kinesics –** movements of body, walk

**Gestures –** hand movements

**Haptic –** touches

**Proximity –** distance from others

**Territoriality -** space and its occupation

**Posture –** body, hands, and legs positioning

**Paralinguistics –** tone of voice, speed and fluency of speech

**Chronemics –** dealing with the time while communicating

**Neurovegetative reactions –** human reactions on communication stimuli – shaking of hands, blushing

**Environment –** says about the person living within the given environment

**Props –** overall looks, adjustment of appearance, scent, car, house

Posture – positioning of the body, is a form of non-verbal communication through physical positioning. We send different signals with our bodies. For example, crossed arms and legs signal secretiveness and inaccessibility of a person.

Social communication deals with posture research. It consists of four basic positions:

* *standing*
* *lying*
* *kneeling*
* *sitting*

It is never about a clear position – it is about their combination, variations of positions. Posture has two categories:

* positive - agreeing – expresses the positive relationship toward a person, agrees with what the person says
* negative - disagreeing – when we disagree, change our attitude.

Depending on the posture we know, whether a person is or isn't accepted within communication.

**What do the individual postures reveal:**

* Legs wide apart and arms akimbo - challenge to a duel.
* Typically, a masculine posture also occurs in women.
* A person whose arms are just slightly akimbo and with legs slightly bent in the knees – purposeful, always ready to help.
* Crossed legs express a defensive attitude.
* Hand in a pocket – trying to cover nervousness.
* One foot not pointing at us – means no interest in further communication.
* One foot resting on the instep of the other foot – the person may want to hide something important.
* One leg twining on the other as liana – shyness.
* Feet neatly side by side – courtesy and clear judgment.

The way of sitting makes it possible to describe indirectly the momentary mental state of a person, how they feel about themselves, their partner and the whole conversation.

* Women sit - legs and knees together, or with bent knees one over the other.
* Men sit – legs apart at an angle of 10-15°.
* In general, a person who sits with their legs together with both feet firmly on the ground is – neat, reliable but also spontaneous.
* If the legs are under the chair crossed at ankles – rigidness.
* Knees together and feet apart – romantic but insecure.

Posture recognizes open and closed physical positions of a person, differentiates between the agreeing and disagreeing attitudes of two or more people. This way it is possible to observe whether the physical position of a student who is being talked to by his teacher alters during the conversation, and if so, whether it inclines to agreement or disagreement.

Research has shown that if there is a closer contact between people, they mutually mimic the movements and body positioning of their partner – they mirror the body posture, raise the hands at the same time, etc. If the positive contact gets disturbed during the communication, the „mirror suddenly shatters “. On behalf of the physical posture the teacher can figure out what is the student´s mental attitude towards him and his requirements (whether he accepts or rejects them), whether he is interested in his lecture, what impact his words have on the student, etc.

If agreement, and understanding prevails between the partners, if they are close to each other, they will take the same body position.  
The individual body parts are mutually influenced. People take different body positions when being alone than being with somebody, or when they know or expect that they are being observed. In solitude the body is relaxed and frequently in a position that is not common in public. Likewise, if we communicate with a close friend or person, the body position is relaxed.   
  
  
Each family has its own system of copying the postures of family members. As a rule, they do not realize that. From copying the postures, it is possible to identify who influences whom.   
In a normal situation the son copies the body posture of his father, the daughter that of her mother. If a child doesn´t copy the body posture of any of his family members it is a sign of its exclusivity toward the family circle.   
  
Disagreement with the opinions of the speaker can be shown clearly without words by:

* Body posture: the arms can be moved from the parallel position in a way that they are in a certain angle with the partner´s arms. The same counts for the feet.
* Simply it can be said that where there is no agreement between the partners, who disagree with the opinions of the other, their bodies are not in a parallel position.
* Those who want to show others their importance, higher position, superiority, will take an incongruent – disagreeing position. This is how teachers often sit next to their students, doctors to their patients, parents to their children, etc.