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POLITEKNIK KESEHATAN KEMENKES PALANGKA RAYA: HEALTH FORUM AND INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR
THE NEW NORMAL : Creating a Pleasant Virtual Communication

Emotional awareness for fun digital communication

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Improving digital communication skills is a necessity in the era of information technology, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and after the pandemic has passed, this need remains. We have to adjust or we fall behind.

Nguyen et.al. (2021) finds the inability to communicate digitally before the pandemic can continue in pandemic times. Someone who has a digital communication device does not necessarily make him capable of communicating digitally. While in the period of physical distancing, the choice of face-to-face communication switched to digital communication. Many activities are run virtually and digitally.

Communication is all verbal and non-verbal behavior that emanates from someone that can be captured and interpreted by others (Wahlroos, 2002). In this definition people can emit nonverbal behaviors that are less aware but have communication meaning, and can arise problems.

In digital communication we must strengthen the skills of stringing words, that's the only effective way to share ideas and feelings (Yeyentimalla, 2020). Unlike the case with face-to-face communication that has three ways, i.e. words, intonation and body language (Mc Peat, 2010).

What about the availability of emoticons and stickers in the WhatsApp platform? Can't it be used to replace intonation and body language? It can indeed be used in the right situations so as to strengthen the words. However, overuse of emoticons and stickers makes messages less personal. We also become less than optimal in the way we are present and respond to the presence of others.

Humans are emotional creatures. We always feel first than we think about our feelings. The alignment of impulses in the brain reaches the limbic system first, we feel. Then the impulses are processed in the cerebri cortex, we become able to think about our feelings. Emotions first felt than thought is the workings of reflex movements so that we can survive (Goleman, 2002).

It's important to be able to do emotional animation consciously. Emotional animation is an attempt to bring to life positively valued emotions such as pleasure, relief, compassion, empathy, gratitude, etc., and controlling negatively valued emotions such as anger, sadness, hate, disgust, etc. The idea of animate emotions is a conscious attempt to do something with emotion, i.e. recognize, use, understand and regulate it (Goleman, 2002; Yeyentimalla, 2019).

A caricature taken from the book "Pede Bersama Professor Rajawali"
(Yeyentimalla, 2020)

We need to improve communication skills to level four, which are safe and comfortable sharing feelings. The division of communication skills levels from Gary Chapman (2012) can be created in the form of an inverted pyramid. Level one is ineffective for linking hearts, we have to jump to level four.

The comfort of speaking to share feelings is the result of being created, not happening unconsciously. It's important to be aware when speaking. Emotional communication includes the art of self-revelation, showing acceptance, implying trust and trustworthiness, and confirming (Yeyentimalla, 2019).

The most visible technique that can be trained is confirmation. Confirmation is effective for careful linking with partners. Confirmation includes immediate recognition, positive feelings, responses asking for information, agreed response, supportive response (Rakhmat, 2012). The act of disconfirming is not recommended because it weakens the relationship. Disconfirming includes blank response, fleeting response, impersonal response, irrelevant response, interrupting response, contradictory response (incongruence response).

It's an example of a conversation where I (Yeyen) consciously build a pleasant conversation, not just answer questions and the conversation is over. I make my friends talk to me comfortably.

Eva   : Bu Yeyen, may I ask for a contact person to continue my study at UGM?
Yeyen   : This is the contact of Mbak Rani, the administrative personnel of FK UGM. Eva loves UGM, ya? Welcome home. (Emoticon smile)
Eva   : Yes, Bu Yeyen, thank you. My son was born in Yogya. Returning to Yogya and UGM is like going home. (Emoticon smile widely)

I know that Eva studied S2 at UGM, this knowledge I used to express support to Eva. We continued the conversation in a happy mood. Bechtle (2010) recommends that we find the sweet spot immediately so that the conversation develops and we enjoy it. The implementation of emotional intelligence for communication success in various social settings and fields of work has the support of much literature (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2018; Schutte el al., 2013). When we use our human devices, especially emotions and are able to think about them, then we enjoy pleasant conversations and strengthen our relationships.

Finally, the way we communicate is rooted in character, but character formation takes a long time. Being aware to do emotional animation in every conversation is a simple short-term solution in fixing communication problems. In digital communication, making optimal the ability to string words is the right choice.

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