Communication and Community:
Cornerstones of Bi-Cultural CPE Supervision
TCI- Theme Centered Interaction – Ruth Cohn
The Four Ear Communication Model –
Friedemann Schulz von Thun

Ute Schmidt, M.Ed.

ACPE Supervisor

Fletcher Allen Health Care Burlington, VT

The Communication Model by Friedemann Schulz von Thun

The 4 Levels of Communicating with One Another
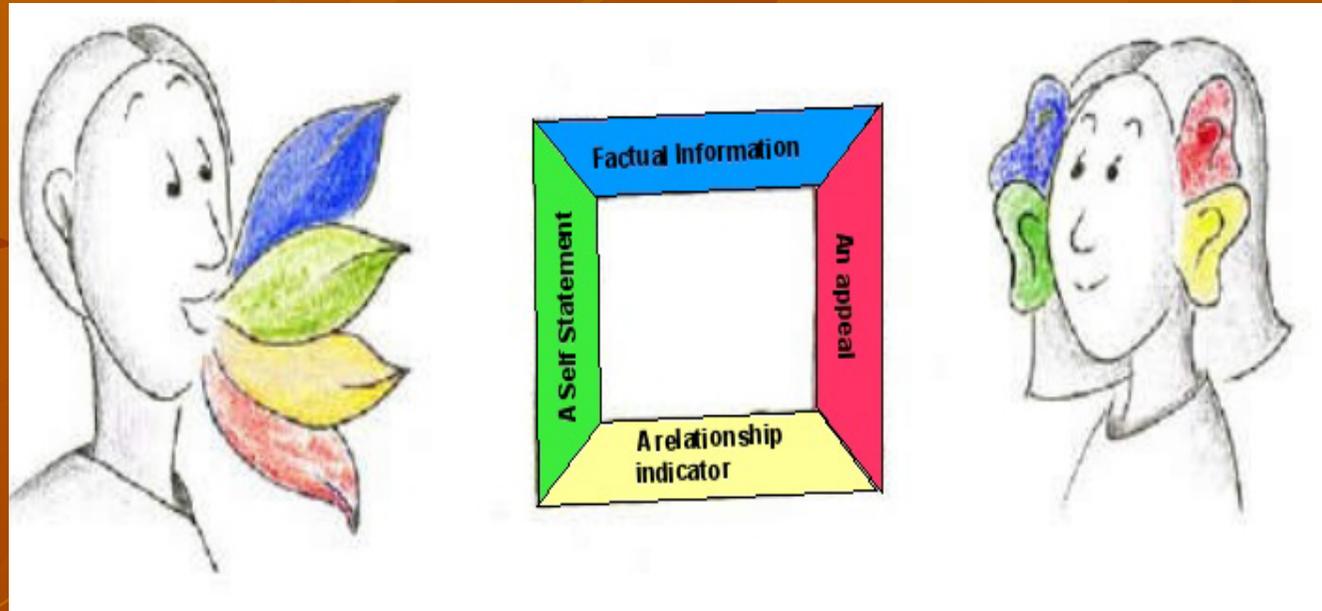
BLUE: Sender: Factual information (which I am informing you about)

Receiver of information: listen with the factual ear

GREEN: Sender: A self statement (what I show of myself)

Receiver: I am hearing something about you as a person

YELLOW: Sender: Relationship indicator (what I think of you; how I relate to you)
Receiver: I am hearing something about our relationship

-RED: Sender: An appeal (what I want you to do) –

Receiver: I am hearing that I am supposed to do something

The Basics of Communication –
Psychological Perspective

Communication is the exchange of verbal messages informed by facial expressions, intonation, use of language. One statement, it has four different levels: factual – self-revelation – relationship – appeal.

- Factual: focus on dates, facts, factual content. The receiver listens with her factual ear according to truth criteria of correct/incorrect, relevant/not relevant, sufficiency

- Self statement: any statement contains information about the person, an indication of what's going on inside, feelings, values, personality traits. The receiver listens with the self-statement ear: what does this tell me about the other at this moment?

Cont.: Relationship Side and Appeal Side of a Message

- Relationship Indicator: sender lets the other person know about the status of the relationship. The receiver listens with the relational ear: focusing on interpersonal dynamics such as role differential, trust, ambiguity and criticism

- Appeal: sender expresses either unconsciously or consciously a desire, a wish for an impact/influence on the other person and his behavior. The receiver listens with an ear that focuses on: what do I have to do, what does she want me to do next?

- Meta- Communication addresses the underlying messages of the exchange. When sender and receive talk about their communication, clarifying intentions, desires, wishes and implications. Reflection process, feedback, relationship clarification = CPE Supervision.

Introduction to Theme Centered Interaction

Theme Centered Interaction (TCI) is a Concept for Personal Development and working with groups.
TCI focuses on the following:

- active, creative and discovering process of Learning and Working.
- process and structure
- making visible the invisible components of group dynamics
- tools and attitudes to optimize interactions in group processes
- applicable to a broad range of group purposes – CPE IPR, Work teams, department teams
- holistic view of personhood
- integrating feelings, thoughts, perceptions and instincts (head, heart, gut)

Theme Centered Interaction –
A Model for Group Process Work
Developed by Ruth Cohn

The triangle surrounded by the circle is the symbol for TCI:
components of the group work that need to be kept in a dynamic balance for a group to
achieve its goals, namely:
- the individual ego (I);
- the need of the group (we)
- the theme (it)
- the environment/context (globe).

Where does it come from?

Ruth Cohn, a Swiss psycho-analyst, is the originator of TCI in the 60's:

- Her intention was to contribute to society by stimulating personal growth and learning in the midst of life.

- To make the insights from Human psychology and psychoanalysis available to a wider range of people

- TCI is based on the fundamental belief that human autonomy increases with active awareness of social and universal interdependence.

- Key values: to respect Life and its evolvement; bio-psycho-spiritual dimension of persons

- The free will occurs within internal and outer boundaries - a expansion of these boundaries is possible.

- TCI is a systematic approach to realize such expansion through the psycho-dynamic and group-pedagogical processes

Two TCI postulates are widely spread by now:

1. 'Be your own chairperson'

- each person is responsible for her/his own thoughts, feelings and needs
- each person takes her/himself, the others and the theme seriously
- commitment and responsibility for being part of the process undergone
- Respect for others in their thoughts, feelings and needs.

2. 'Disturbances have precedence'
- When disturbance are not addressed, they occupy energy and prevent people from being in the here and now, hidden agendas
- to give a space to these disturbances, where possible remedy them, otherwise agree to consciously park them.

Important polarities at the heart of TCI and human interactions

Balance of structure, process and trust:

Structure:
- too much structure prevents the process to unfold
- too little prevent the process from being conclusive
- structure encourages to concentrate on what matters rather than being caught in details

Process:
- Role of group facilitator to plan and structure group session: focus and openess
- Routine and free-floating moments: fluidity between those phases based on mastery of the facilitator and the chairpersonship of each participant

Trust:
- as the outcome of the balance between structure and process
- Structure generates trust if it fosters the flow of the process
- If structure and process are kept in balance then trust can manifest itself
- Lack of trust often means: equilibrium between structure and process is broken. (i.e. structure has taken over, prevents the theme or the participants to express their needs of the present moment)
- I.E.: process has taken over, leads nowhere tangible for the participants = discomfort is growing (high anxiety).
- I.E.: facilitator interrupts a process in the middle of the flow may create mistrust.

Bibliography:

- Academy for Conflict Transformation

  www.schulz-von-thun.de
- *www.ehornecker.de/Papers/TZI.pdf* (english)
- *www.eppler-baden.ch/Texte* (english)
- Books: hard copy bibliography available