

Guidelines

Interpersonal Paper

Write a paper (3 typed pages, double-spaced) in which you analyze an interpersonal relationship in which you are or have been involved. It may be an intimate, casual, fleeting, or long-term relationship involving a friend, spouse, roommate, parent, or brother or sister.

In your analysis, apply concepts we have covered in class to discover the nature of the relationship and why it progressed in the way that it did. You may be as creative as you like in selecting and applying concepts to the relationship, but the following are two options you may wish to consider (don't do both; pick one of the options). You probably cannot cover all of the topics listed under each option in 3 pages, so select those that are most relevant to and interesting about your relationship to discuss.

OPTION #1: Analysis of the Stages of the Relationship

1. Initiating stage
 - A. Decision to encounter
 - B. Sizing up the other person
 - C. Greeting
 - D. Small Talk
2. Intensifying stage
 - A. Verbal patterns
 1. Informal forms of address
 2. Use of first person plural
 3. Private symbols
 4. Verbal shortcuts
 5. Direct expressions of commitment
 6. Sophistication in nonverbal communication
3. Integrating stage
 - A. Verbal patterns
 - B. Nonverbal patterns
4. Bonding stage
 - A. Public ritual
 - B. Effect of bonding on the relationship
5. Stabilization stage
 - A. Agreement on definition of the relationship
 - B. Level of intimacy at which the relationship is stabilized
6. Differentiating stage
 - A. Verbal patterns
 - B. Nonverbal patterns

7. Circumscribing stage
 - A. Verbal patterns
 - B. Nonverbal patterns
8. Stagnating stage
 - A. Verbal patterns
 - B. Nonverbal patterns
9. Avoiding stage
 - A. Verbal patterns
 - B. Nonverbal patterns
10. Terminating stage
 - A. Method of termination
 - B. Verbal and nonverbal patterns
 1. Messages of distance
 2. Messages of disassociation
 3. Messages that tell what the future relationship will be like
11. Movement through the stages
 - A. Sequence of steps/stages
 - B. Rate of movement through the stages

OPTION #2: Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses in Communication in the Relationship

1. What are the foundations of intimacy in the relationships?
 - A. Personality and background factors
 1. Self-concept
 - B. Situational and developmental factors
 - C. Cultural guidelines
 - D. Emotional arousal and labeling
 - E. Self-fulfillment
 - F. Self-surrender
 - G. Commitment to a joint identity
2. What are the characteristics of the relationship in the following areas--problems and strengths?
 - A. Level of self-disclosure
 - B. General pattern of listening
 1. Evaluative responses
 2. Interpretive responses
 3. Supportive responses
 4. Probing responses
 5. Understanding responses
 - C. General pattern of assertiveness
 - D. General method of conflict resolution
 1. Win-lose strategies
 2. Lose-lose strategies
 3. Win-win strategies