

# Adapting Communication to Cultures and Social Communities

## Chapter Eight

# Focus Questions

- How do cultures and social communities shape communication?
- How does communication shape cultures and social communities?
- What is ethnocentric bias?
- How do people respond to cultural differences in communication?

# Relationships Between Culture & Communication

- Culture
  - a system of ideas, values, beliefs, customs, and language
  - passed from one generation to the next
  - sustains a particular way of life

# We Learn Culture in the Process of Communicating

- We learn culture by observing and interacting with others
- We learn culture through exposure to mass communication
- From others, we learn language and what it means

# Communication Is a Primary Indicator of Culture

- Individualistic cultures
- Collectivist cultures
- Low-context communication style
- High-context communication style

# Multiple Social Communities May Coexist in a Single Culture

- Social communities
  - groups of people who live within a dominant culture who belong to another social group or groups.
- Standpoint theory

# Communication Expresses and Sustains Cultures

- Each time we express cultural values, we also perpetuate them
- Communication
  - is a mirror of a culture's values
  - a primary means of keeping values in everyday life

# Communication Is a Source of Cultural Change

- We use communication to resist the mainstream's efforts to define an identity
- Communication propels change by naming things in ways that shape how we understand them.



# Guidelines for Adapting Communication to Diverse Cultures and Social Communities

- Engage in person-centered communication
- Respect others' feelings and ideas
- Resist ethnocentric bias
  - Ethnocentrism
  - Cultural relativism

# Adapting to Cultural Diversity Is a Process

- Resistance
- Assimilation
- Tolerance
- Understanding
- Respect
- Participation

# Summary

- Relationships between culture & communication
- We learn culture in the process of communicating
- Communication is a primary indicator of culture

# Summary

- Multiple social communities may coexist in a single culture
- Communication expresses & sustains cultures
- Communication is a source of cultural change
- Diverse cultures and social communities