

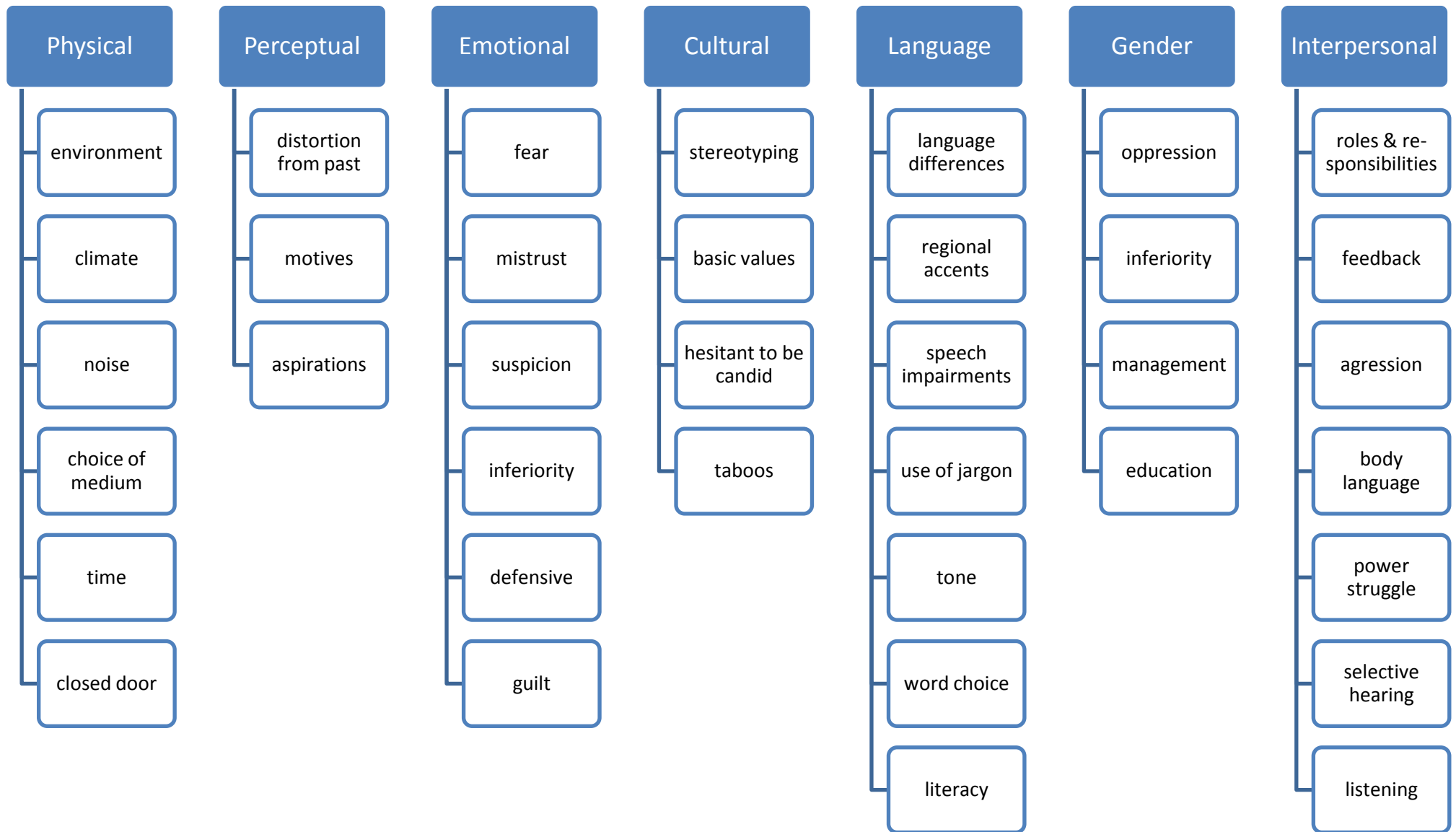
## MODULE 1.4, HANDOUT #1: Barriers to good communication (page 1 of 2)

1. **Perceptual barriers:** our perception (awareness) of an issue is determined by many factors. Even people from the same family can have different perceptions about the same issue depending on their age, gender, level of education, etc. Therefore, people in the conservancy community (members and non-members) can have different perceptions, knowledge, beliefs and opinions regarding issues relevant to the conservancy and its management and activities.
2. **Language barriers:** Namibians speak many different languages and therefore have wholly different words for things, ideas and issues that the conservancy may wish to discuss. It is therefore important that we use simple and clear words at all times and (if necessary) use a translator to convey important information (verbal as well as written).
3. **Cultural barriers:** different Namibian ethnic groups have different cultural/traditional practices and these may affect the way that the conservancy can communicate effectively with all members of one sub-sector of the community, or another.
4. **Emotional barriers:** we need to be especially sensitive in the language that we use when we are dealing with controversial, contentious, or sensitive issues (such as HIV/AIDS, or poaching for bush meat, to give two examples) that can be the cause of disagreement or even open conflict among conservancy members. It is critical to maintain confidentiality at all times when dealing with personal details, yet balance this against the need to bring particular challenges to the attention of a wider audience.
5. **Inappropriate body language:** a communicator needs to be aware of his/her body language and should strive to use it effectively. It is important to use body language to enhance a message, rather than undermine it. It is fine to use body language to emphasise a point, but not to the extent that the audience feels that they are being alienated or judged in some way (don't point at an individual, for example, or single out a particular group – even if you are not actually criticising them at the time).
6. **Organisational barriers:** a simple conservancy organisational structure will make communication easier; an overly complex structure, on the other hand, will create the potential for communication breakdown. The number of hierarchical levels should be as few as possible.
7. **Physical barriers:** some Namibian conservancies cover vast areas. This provides lot of challenges in communicating with all members of the community as people live long distances from one another, and may not have access to telephones, radios etc.
8. **Gender barriers:** there are many interconnecting historical, cultural, social and education-based reasons why women may be prevented from communicating freely, or accessing means of communication equitably. We should, as a conservancy, encourage the equal participation and representation of both men and women in all conservancy activities.

## MODULE 1.4, HANDOUT #1: Barriers to good communication (page 2 of 2)

9. **Poor listening skills:** there is a difference between 'listening' and 'hearing'. Active listening means hearing with a proper understanding of the message that is being conveyed. By asking questions, the speaker can find out whether his/her message is understood or not by the receiver in the manner that was intended by the speaker. Similarly, a CC should schedule satisfactory time to meet with its members and stakeholders, and should listen carefully to problems and feedback.
10. **Information overload:** the CC should know how to prioritise the information it wants to communicate. It is critical not to overload any audience with unnecessary information. For example, having a meeting agenda that has too many points that need to be covered in a couple of hours will not contribute towards good communication as no single issue will be dealt with in any detail due to time constraints. The CC should, in this instance, just choose a few main and pressing issues that need to be discussed and/or shared with the conservancy members, and leave other, less important, issues to another time.
11. **Improper feedback:** feedback delivered in a negative manner is neither helpful nor constructive. A good communicator can deliver negative feedback in such a manner that it is received constructively. Constructive feedback will lead to effective and productive communication between a superior and subordinate, or between the CC and the conservancy community. It is therefore important to convey bad news or details of a problem in a way that opens up a dialogue about resolving a situation and controlling its effects.
12. **Inappropriate communication methods:** the CC should exercise care in choosing its medium of communication. Simple messages can be conveyed verbally (informally as a face-to-face interaction, or formally at meetings, for example) Use of written means of communication should be encouraged for delivering complex messages, or instructions that require someone to act upon them. For significant messages, reminders can be given issued in writing.
13. **Literacy levels:** not every conservancy member is able to read or write, or do so in the same language as other members. This will have an influence on the strategies we use to communicate. For example, wherever possible key documents should be subsequently summarised into a poster format, using icons/illustrations instead of names/words, for display in the conservancy office.
14. **Disabilities:** in our conservancy we may have people who are disabled (e.g., hearing impaired, visually or verbally challenged, etc.). It is important that efforts are made to accommodate these individuals wherever it is practicable to do so (i.e., using sign-language interpreters, or making sure that lip readers are placed close to a speaker).

## MODULE 1.4, HANDOUT #2: Overcoming communication barriers (page 1 of 3)



## MODULE 1.4, HANDOUT #2: Overcoming communication barriers – formal strategies (page 2 of 3)

### Physical

- Try and conduct smaller decentralised village-based meetings in good physical conditions which will enhance communication

### Perceptual

- Conduct official training on 'how to communicate'
- Staff and conservancy management committee to sign code of conduct

### Emotional

- No official strategy can overcome emotional barriers to communication.
- Staff and conservancy committee members need to sign a code of conduct which need to include professional and appropriate communication strategies

### Cultural

- Carry out 'Basic Organisational Culture Assessments with the assistance of an outside facilitator
- Design Action Plans for the implementation of the findings.
- Show appreciation and respect for the different cultural practices

### Language

- Develop Language policy for the conservancy.
- Allow people to always communicate in language that they are most comfortable with.

### Gender

- Create a conservancy 'Gender Policy'
- Ensure that all contracts etc. are non-discriminatory
- Encourage the representation of women in decision-making bodies

### Inter-personal

- Conduct official training on 'how to communicate'.
- Training and policy on roles and responsibilities.

## MODULE 1.4, HANDOUT #2: Overcoming communication barriers – informal strategies (page 3 of 3)

### Physical

- Try and conduct smaller decentralised village-based meetings in good physical conditions which will enhance communication

### Perceptual

- Encourage and support good behaviors.
- Ensure the implementation of communication policies and code of conduct.

### Emotional

- Develop and implement code of conduct that will guide staff , conservancy committee members , conservancy members

### Cultural

- Encourage people to be open about their different cultural practices.
- Ask for issues to be explained in more detail.

### Language

- Ensure that all important documents are translated in the local languages.
- Translator present during official communication and also in other complicated situations.

### Gender

- Facilitate the active participation of women and men during conservancy meetings
- Use role-models/examples to encourage 'gender-friendly' behavior in more 'traditional' men

### Inter-personal

- Be sensitive of body language.
- Know your roles and responsibilities and also the channel of command.
- Show respect everybody.



**MODULE 1.4, HANDOUT #4: Stakeholder relationships (template)**

Type of participation						
Stage in the project cycle	Identified action	Key stakeholder to be involved (e.g. MET), advisable to also specify individual(s)	What is expected from the partner?	What needs to be done by the conservancy to help achieve the result?	Expected outcome?	Who takes control?
Planning						
Implementation						
Monitoring and evaluation						











## **MODULE 1.4, HANDOUT # 7: Self-assessment evaluation for participants**

Participants receiving training in Module 1.4 are not subject to formal assessment. However, in order for you to assess the knowledge and skills you have acquired on stakeholder communication and relationship management, and for the trainer to ascertain how effective the training has been, you are encouraged to answer for yourself the following questions and discuss your answers – as part of a group or individually – with your trainer.

- 1. Can I list four reasons why good communication is important for the operations and functions of the conservancy?**
- 2. Can I list six barriers to communication that are of especial relevance at my conservancy, and suggest two strategies for overcoming each?**
- 3. Can I identify eight of my conservancy's primary stakeholders?**
- 4. Am I able to list the chief benefit to my conservancy of the relationship it has with each primary stakeholder?**
- 5. Can I identify six of my conservancy's secondary stakeholders?**
- 6. Am I able to characterise the nature of the current relationships between my conservancy and the eight primary stakeholders listed above?**
- 7. Am I able to characterise the nature of the current relationships between my conservancy and the six secondary stakeholders listed above?**
- 8. Can I describe some strategies for improving problematic relationships that the conservancy currently has with five stakeholders (primary or secondary)?**
- 9. Can I describe some strategies for maximising good relationships that the conservancy currently has with five stakeholders (primary or secondary)?**
- 10. Am I able to identify the main scheduled meetings/events that my conservancy holds with stakeholders, and list which stakeholders must attend each?**
- 11. Can I list the main sections of a conservancy Communication and Relationship Management Plan, and briefly describe the contents of each?**