• **Interpersonal communication**

- This unit is mainly concerned with one-to-one, face-to-face relationships— in other words, relationships between two people, who are in each other’s physical presence, who can watch each other during the communication process, and who can give each other immediate feedback.
• Buber’s theory of interpersonal relationships
  - Buber suggested that the basis of human existence is that people are communicating beings.
  - He identified two types of interpersonal relationships.
    ✓ I – you relationships
    ✓ I – it relationships
• The difference lies in the nature of the communication that takes place between them. The concepts dialogue and monologue makes it easier to understand the difference.

• **Dialogue**: is a conversation in which both participants can equally express and interpret each others messages.

• **Monologue**: is a conversation where the communicator is seen as the only participant, as he does not take into account the other persons view or allow them to respond meaningfully.
I – you relationships

- Partners approach each other with mutual respect, sincerity, honesty with the intention of participating in a reciprocal relationship.

- A space opens up between people which Buber calls an interhuman domain - the dialogue unfolds and “you” and “I” become “we”.

- The relationship is based on intersubjectivity (acknowledge and understand their differences) and individuality.
• I – it relationship

- The attitudes and intentions of the I is that his partner is not an equal subject but an object to be manipulated for personal gain.

- The intention of the I is to persuade the views and needs by conducting a monologue.

- This relationship is characterised by self centeredness, pretence, manipulation and exploitation.

- It does not include the option of agreement to differ.
• Interpersonal communication and needs

- Theories have been developed about interpersonal needs and allow us to understand why we and others behave the way we do in our relationships.

- Schutz developed an interpersonal theory that people need people. He suggests that we need to satisfy three basic human needs to develop interpersonal relationships with others.
• Schutz’s interpersonal needs theory.

- Need for inclusion: a desire for social contact, be in the company of others and maintain a feeling of mutual interest with them.

  - **Oversocial people**: continually seek the companionship of others.
  
  - **Undersocial people**: prefer being left alone.
  
  - **Adaptable – social people**: balance their need for inclusion and privacy.
- **Need for affection**: we all need opportunities to show and receive affection from others. To form emotionally close relationships and express the affection verbally and nonverbally.

  - **Overpersonal people**: have a high need of relationships with others, confide in others and express feelings freely.
  
  - **Underpersonal people**: avoid close ties, value privacy and have little need for affection.
  
  - **Personal people**: express and receive affection when desirable but can maintain a distance when necessary.
- **Need for control**: the desire both to successfully manage and influence events and people around you and allow others to establish control.

  - **Autocrats**: dominate others, must be in charge and become anxious if they are not in charge.
  - **Abdicrats**: people with a strong need to be controlled, prefer not to make decisions or accept responsibility, submissive and abdicates all power to their partners.
  - **Democrats**: know when it is appropriate to control but is also comfortable submitting to others when necessary.
Homan’s social exchange theory

- This theory suggests that, when we enter into communication, we look at what we get from the encounter. The exchange is two-way: each partner has something the other desires or values, so, for Homan’s, communication is similar to a commercial exchange between a buyer and a seller. In the same way that we do not go into business with the expectation of losing money, we do not put time or effort into a relationship we feel we are getting nothing or little out of it.
Homan’s theory uses economic terms such as “profit” and “loss” to describe an interpersonal outcome or “exchange”. If, for example, an interaction between two people, is positive, the outcome of the relationship is regarded as a profit. If the interaction is negative, the outcome of the relationship is regarded as a loss. A profit or reward means that you gain something for yourself; it does not have to be money. Cost, on the other hand, has a negative meaning, and can be regarded as a kind of punishment.
• Interpersonal communication and self-disclosure

- self-disclosure means to reveal personal information such as inner experiences and private thoughts. We usually hide this type of information from others.

- Please note that while self-disclosure is essential to the growth of meaningful interpersonal relationships, it is in intrapersonal communication that we decide how much information about our private self we are willing to reveal to other people.
A model of self-disclosure (The Johari window)

- The window represents yourself. The self includes everything about you, including things you do not even know about. Do you agree that, as a relationship becomes closer, the open pane grows larger? And that the hidden quadrant in the window is usually fairly large at the beginning of a relationship, but becomes smaller as the open pane grows larger? As you learn and disclose more about yourself to others, the unknown quadrant becomes smaller and smaller.
Because we can never know ourselves completely, the unknown pane will always exist. But, as people get to know us better, they may tell us things about ourselves that we did not know about— in other words, information that comes from the unknown pane. As this happens, the blind pane—that is, the pane that contains information about ourselves that we do not know—will become smaller. This is how our close relationships help us to gain self-knowledge. To see how the size of the panes changes as we self-disclose, look at the two Johari windows drawn below. Start your analysis by looking at the biggest pane.
The four quadrants are interdependent, thus a change in one quadrant will affect the others.
• **Window A** has a large hidden pane and a small open pane. Window A represents someone who is not prepared to share his or her self with others. It is usually very difficult for this sort of person to form close relationships.

• **Window B** has an extremely large open pane and a very small hidden pane. Window B is regarded as being the ideal window for an intimate relationship.
- Assertiveness training has become common practice, more recently, assertive behaviour as a communication skill has begun to be valued in South Africa. Everyone needs to learn assertiveness as a communication skill.

- What exactly is assertiveness? The first point to remember is that being assertive is not the same as being aggressive. Being assertive enables you to express yourself clearly and confidently without putting down yourself and without putting other people down.
- **Assertive styles**

- Three communication styles of coping with situations.

- **passive style** : suppressing feelings to avoid conflict and rejection.

- **aggressive style** : lashing out at the source of discomfort with little concern for the situation or feelings of others.

- **assertive style** : neither avoid conflict nor dominates a relationship but communicate feelings and opinions honestly and clearly without hurting others.