

Conversations about Interpersonal Safety

Mark Sweet PhD

Trainer & Consultant

Disability Rights Wisconsin

608 267 0214

msweet@drwi.org

disabilityrightswi.org

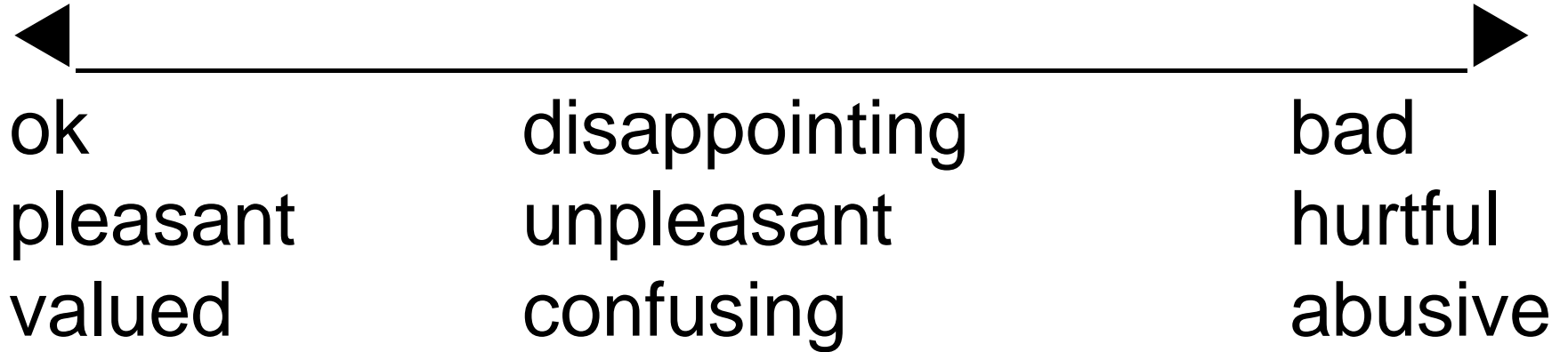
Fall 2015

Interpersonal Safety Involves Other People

Types of Contact

- sensory (passive)
 - manners (active)
 - paid
 - reciprocal
- ↳ possible consequences

Experiences of Interpersonal Contact



↳ **How did you learn?**

↳ **When did you stop?**

Would you rather support someone who does

- ☐ What s/he wants
- ☐ What you want

A preference for

- ☐ Assertiveness
- ☐ Compliance

❑ We try to assure interpersonal safety

- ▶ by directing, restricting, grouping
- ▶ by characterizing
- ▶ by implementing behavioral plans

❑ By not acknowledging the need for meaningful interpersonal learning;
 ↳ we ignore, omit, neglect

⇒ *It's absurd, & we do it every day.*

Characterization locks the brain

- ▶ *wild, out of control*
 - ▶ *angry*
 - ▶ *difficult*
 - ▶ *doing it for attention*
 - ▶ *is challenging*
 - ▶ *aggressive*
 - ▶ *low functioning*
 - ▶ *manipulative*
 - ▶ *out of nowhere*
 - ▶ ***it's behavioral***
- ▶ *for this population*

Whose POV are these?

☐ What % of (support) interactions are

☐ setting limits, restricting?

☐ directing, telling?

☐ correcting?

☐ What % of time is the person probably trying to achieve personal wellbeing?

Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements

by Tom Rath & Jim Harter

- liking what you do (**career**)
- strong relationships & love (**social**)
- effectively managing your money (**financial**)
- having enough energy (**physical**)
- familiar & engaged (**community**)

What would happen if you were...

- trying to achieve wellbeing
- showing interest or emotion

& you got a behavior plan?

→ Each student had a POV; was trying

- ▶ do what had been taught or learned
- ▶ to cope
- ▶ to understand
- ▶ to assert
- ▶ to accomplish

& was characterized behaviorally

- curiosity & interest don't make people vulnerable
 - attempts to achieve wellbeing should not be dismissed as *behavioral*
 - ignoring, omitting & neglecting difficult topics is what makes people vulnerable
- so, what is the right thing to do?

- washing dishes
- bowling
- using a debit card
- making a sandwich
- clothes in the dryer
- doing a job
- riding a bus
- changing sheets
- following a recipe

- **assertiveness**
- **emotions**
- **coping**
- **self-direction**
- **choice**
- **responsibility**
- **communication**
- **interpersonal -
social safety**



teachable?

Conversation Starters about Interpersonal Safety

Theme: Interaction

Theme: Respect, Body Feelings, Emotions

Theme: Trust

Theme: Public & Private

Theme: Being Nice & Saying No, Stop, Don't

Theme: Secrets, Threats

- ❑ A compliant, restricted life does not result in better judgment, thinking or increased interpersonal safety.
- ❑ How could you bring meaningful engagement about interpersonal safety into the life of someone you know?

Free resources at disabilityrightswi.org

- ◆ Conversations about Interpersonal Safety
- ◆ Creating Safety by asking
What makes people vulnerable?

Click: Publications
Search: (title)