



SENSITIVITY TO RISK OF DANGER IN THE WORKPLACE:

A SELF-GUIDED QUESTIONNAIRE.

(Initial version created by and used with permission from Eva Skolnick Acker)

Are your instincts keeping you safe? Are you either too nervous, or too complacent about on-the-job safety? Are you more likely to under-react, or over-react to potential threats?

We all fall somewhere along a continuum, and the safest position (for our clients, colleagues and ourselves) is guided by a balanced viewpoint. Do you have balance? These questions should help you think about this important issue.

Are you an UNDER- REACTER? being complacent or more confident than you should be? Under-reaction has serious consequences such as ...

- Remaining in a situation of escalating aggression too long without action ,
- Misleading colleagues who are taking their cues from you
- Sending a message that, in order to get your attention and respect, one must escalate their own level of aggression.
- **QUESTIONS**
 - Has anyone ever told you that you are fearless at work?
 - Do you pride yourself in knowing you can handle anything; no matter what comes your way?
 - Do you wonder what your colleagues or fellow students are talking about when they say they are sometimes afraid at work/ field placement?
 - Do you find yourself critical of colleagues/ fellow students who have been threatened or assaulted?
 - Have you ever voluntarily broken a workplace safety rule because you "trust" or "know" your client well?

- Do you rely on your relationship with your client as a safety tool?

Are you an OVER-REACTER? ... feeling and reacting as if danger is present, even when it may not be? Over-reaction also has consequences such as...

- Sending a negative message to the client when all that might be needed is to acknowledge the feeling of anger that is being expressed and problem-solving
- Getting triggered leading to freezing, which can lead to an inability to think or act in a timely manner

- QUESTIONS

- In general, are you comfortable with the emotion of anger?
 - Your own anger: (Do you tend to suppress, avoid or deny your anger? Do you explode in angry outbursts? Do you become passive-aggressive?)
 - Your client's anger:

- Are you afraid of anger radiated or expressed towards you?
- Do you minimize, avoid or deny the anger you feel or see?
- Do you "act normal" as if the anger was not happening?
- Do you retaliate with angry?
- Can you imagine yourself "freezing" and unable to think of a way out?
- Do you usually/often feel tense or jumpy when working with a specific category of client e.g. certain kinds of men, teenagers, members of a cultural group different than your own?
- Do you think that events in your own personal history have surfaced unexpectedly later in life or at work (e.g. have you been mugged, assaulted, treated harshly as a child, witnessed aggression toward someone you love) and you find yourself reliving the emotions associated with these events in the present ?

If the answer is yes to any question, please discuss with your supervisor.