


A dried orange flower with five petals and a long stem, positioned on the left side of the slide.A sunburst graphic consisting of several short lines radiating from a central point, positioned above the title.

Lifespan Caring Network

Respite Care Training Program

Be the Horizon:

Coping with Challenging Moments

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*Adapted and used with permission from "Lifespan Respite Training Manual" published by the Respite Care Association of Wisconsin

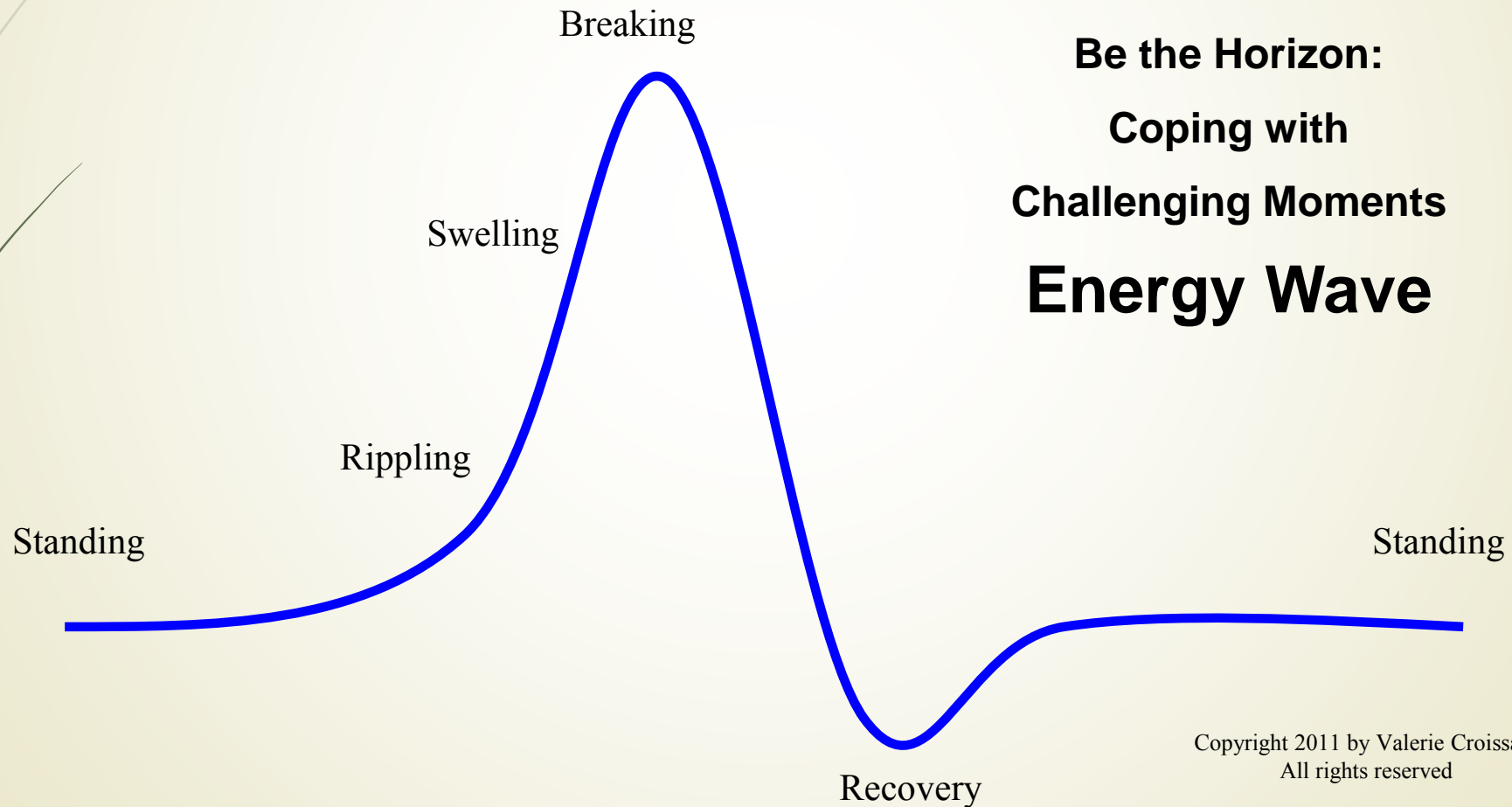


Challenging behaviors

- ✿ This section covers dealing with challenging behaviors. Many of the things covered are applicable to a wide variety of individuals and in a wide variety of settings.
- ✿ The tips and information provided here will not only apply to people with disabilities. Some techniques may work with anyone who is starting to become upset. You can apply this information to family members, significant others, co-workers, children, adults, and people with and without disabilities.
- ✿ Some techniques might work well for some, but make things worse for others. These tips might work one day, but not the next. Try not to get frustrated, and keep trying new things. There is no magical solution to eliminating challenging moments. We need to be able to recognize the wave and learn to cope – and to keep all involved, safe.

Energy Wave

This module is based on the following energy wave. We will go through each stage of the wave and talk about what to look for, and some ways for the respite provider to cope in the moment.





Standing

“Still; not flowing or stagnant; customary or habitual; generally understood”

Definition and Examples:

- ▶ This is considered the baseline, or typical level for the individual.
- ▶ The individual is relaxed, calm, has even breathing, normal voice, and is interacting at his/her typical level.



Respite Worker Response

- ▶ Concentrate on positive interactions by verbally praising, touching the shoulder, and doing an activity the individual enjoys.
- ▶ The majority of your energy should be spent in this stage, trying to be proactive. Be prepared and try to prevent someone from starting to ripple.
- ▶ Here are some TIPS AND TRICKS to stay in the *Standing stage* of the wave...



Tips and tricks

- ▶ **Be proactive:** Interact with positive activities to prevent anxiety. If you see anxious behavior, change the interaction, activity or location immediately; don't wait until the person is starting to ripple.
- ▶ **Foreshadow:** For example, "In 15 minutes we will be finished with this activity," "In 10 minutes we will be finished with this activity," "In 4 minutes..." "In 3 minutes..." "In 2 minutes..." Go over the schedule of activities. He/she may not have the concept of time, but will understand that a transition is coming soon, and will recognize a change in activity.
- ▶ **Refuel:** Take time away from an activity; if you see him/her becoming agitated or over-tired, change the activity level to a more sedentary one (watch TV, listen to music, play on the computer), or just sit quietly.



Tips and tricks, cont.

- ▶ **Create Diversions:** Life is much easier on all of us when we have diversions to help us concentrate on something else (“Do you want to go swing?” “Hey, look over there, I think I see some turkeys - let’s go on a turkey hunt!” “Race you!”)
- ▶ **Re-Direct:** If he seems to be having a rough time, and anxiety, frustration or agitation begin to sneak in, re-direct his attention to something else (“You know, I think that I saw a new game in the basement - should we go check it out?” “Hey, I think your mom needed help raking the leaves - ready to go?”)
- ▶ **Be enthusiastic:** If you approach an activity with enthusiasm and excitement, there is a good chance she will too!



Tips and tricks, cont.

- ▶ **Pick your battles:** Planned ignoring is a good tactic. Correct the things that need to be corrected, *not little things* that will not affect the positive outcome of your time together.
- ▶ **Think light:** Have a good time! If you are always serious and telling her to “STOP,” or saying “NO” with a stern face, what happens when you really need her to stop because of an emergency or safety issue?
- ▶ **Tactile Diversion, or Leading:** Using your body language to lead him towards an outcome is very effective, e.g. if you are trying to leave the living room and go to the kitchen while saying, “Let’s go to the kitchen,” stand up and start moving towards the kitchen. An example of tactile diversion: if he is touching your shoulder too much, or tapping the table, gently place your hand on his hand to stop the tapping, or place his hand where it should be (down to his side, for example.)




Tips and tricks, cont.

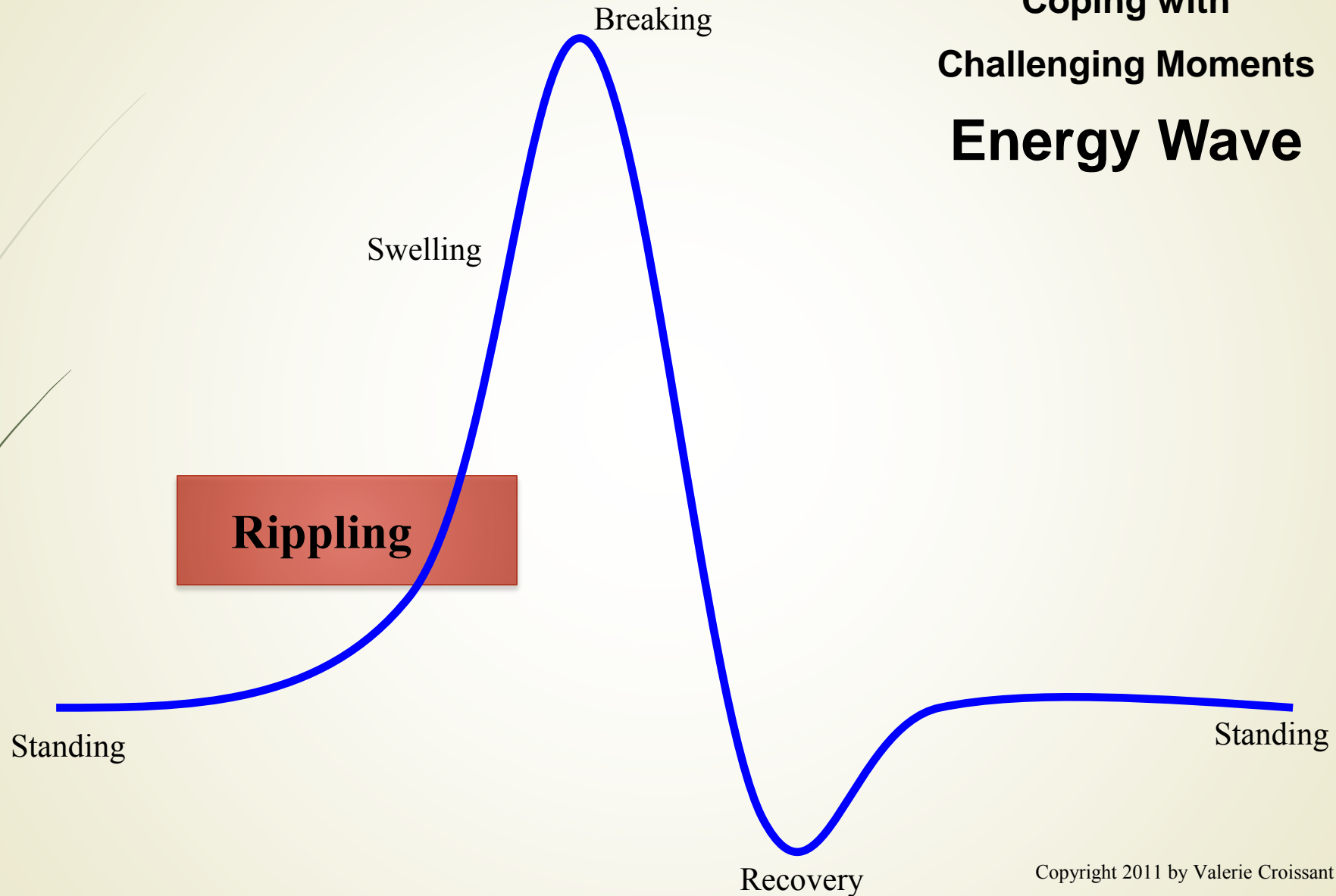
- ▶ **Walk:** If he appears to be becoming anxious or agitated, go for a walk, or even run. Physical exercise lowers the amount of stress in the body and the change of scenery can make a big difference.
- ▶ **Follow Through:** If it gets to the point that action is necessary, follow through on your consequence. Make sure she is aware of an upcoming consequence (“OK, if you throw your crayons again, then we are done coloring”) and *follow through*. Make sure your consequences are *realistic and appropriate* for the incident. Never set a limit that you cannot, or do not intend, to follow through.
- ▶ **Be Kind to Yourself:** Be sure not to give consequences to the individual that may be harder on you, or that may cause anxiety.



Tips and tricks, cont.

- **Stay Calm:** Remember he/she is looking and responding to your reaction, and will respond to your body language, voice (tone, volume and speed) and energy.
 - **Most importantly, HAVE FUN!** Enjoy each individual and his quirks. Laugh with him and make him laugh. This is the best diversion and tip to remember. Take it easy and RELAX!
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Rippling

“To form small waves or undulations, as water agitated by a breeze”

Definition and Examples:

- ▶ The individual is starting move away from his/her baseline and is showing signs of becoming anxious.
- ▶ This might include a change in eye contact, breathing, vocalizations, pacing, clenched fists, and/or overall body language.



Respite Worker Response

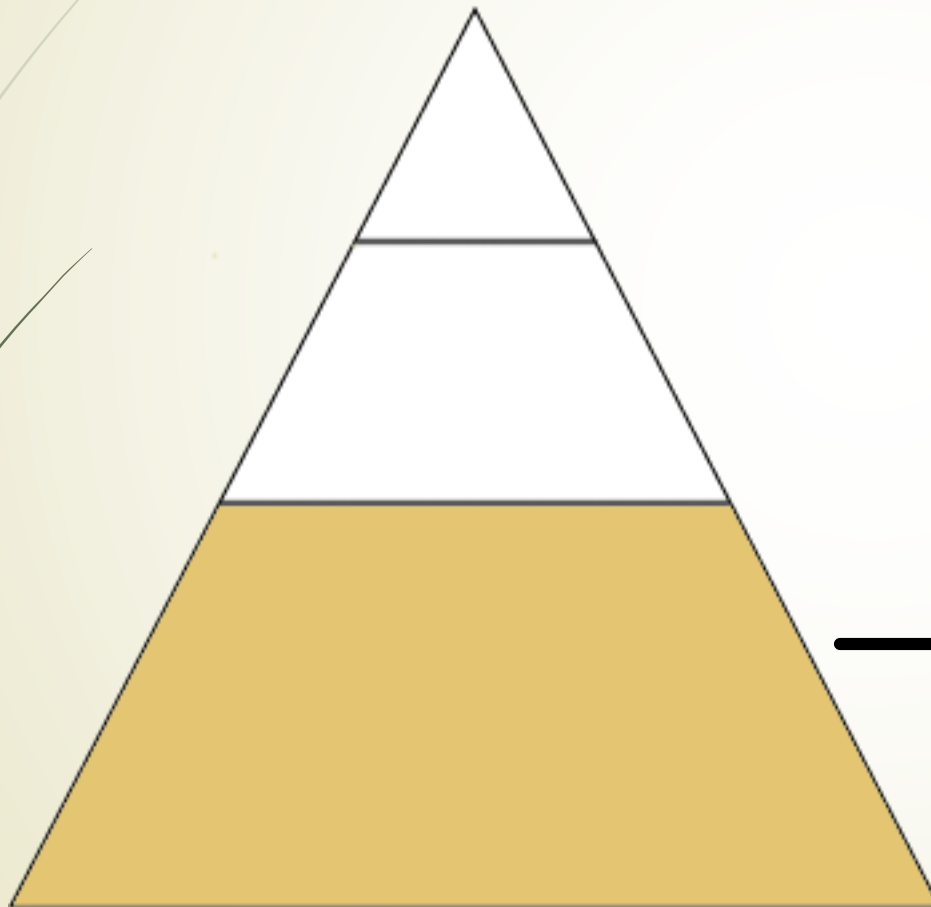
Functions of Behavior

- To gain access to someone or something
- To avoid something or someone
- For sensory gratification or for medical reasons

You need to know *what motivates someone*, and figure out the *function* of the behavior. Once you know this, then you know how to respond.

If an individual is “acting out” in order to avoid something, you need to take this into consideration when setting limits and consequences.

Pyramid of Communication



Non-verbal
Communication:
accounts for 55-75% of
perceived messages



Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is communication other than spoken language.

You are communicating with your *body language* at all times, even if you are not speaking. Non-verbal communication includes:

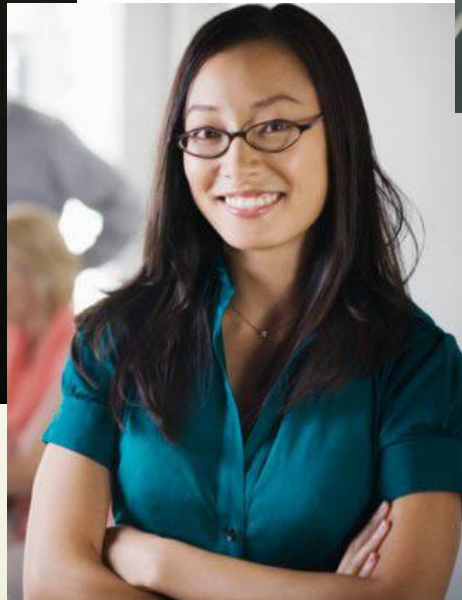
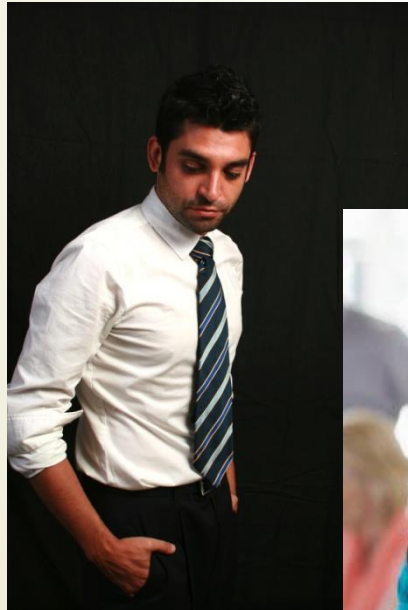
- Facial expressions
- Posture
- Gestures
- Distance

This is the *primary* way in which we communicate emotions.



Body Language, Facial Expressions and Eye Contact

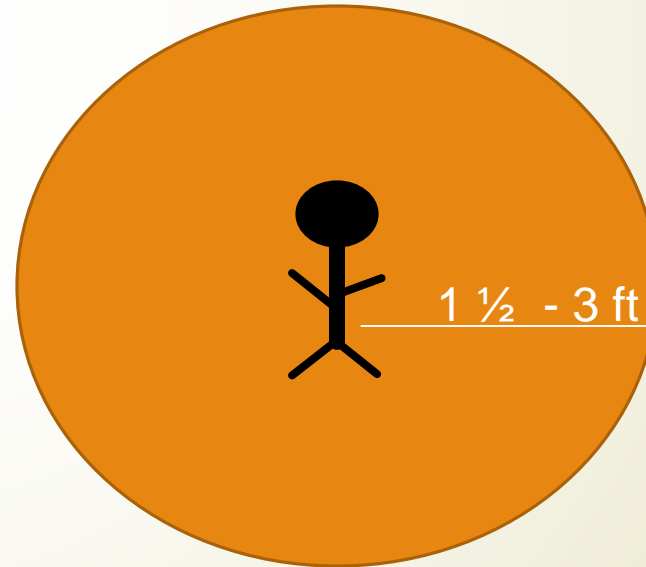
Your body sends messages by the motions and postures of the body. This portrays a huge part of your overall message. Be conscious of your body language when talking to people.



Personal Space

- ▶ The typical American has a personal space bubble of $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 3 feet of space between himself and another person. Each person is different, and there are many things that might affect the amount of space that one is comfortable with at any given time.

Things that might affect someone's personal space:
culture, race, past experiences, hygiene, equipment, gender, posture, memories.

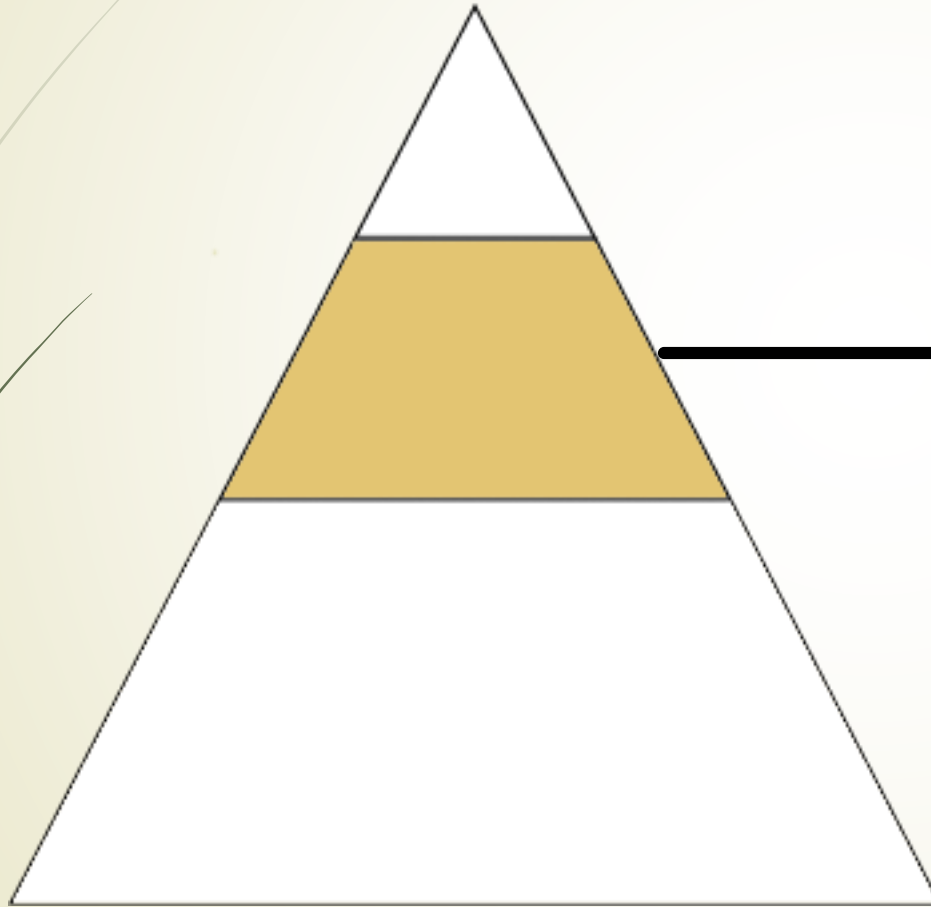


Respite Worker Response

- ▶ Think about how you feel if you are starting to ripple. Do you want someone “in your face,” or someone following you around as closely as possible?
- ▶ As much as you can, *give the individual some space*, remembering that you are responsible for his/her safety.



Pyramid of Communication



Para-verbal
Communication:
accounts for 15-38% of
perceived messages

Para-Verbal Communication

Not **what** you say, but **how** you say it.

- Voice quality, tone, emphasis on words, rate, pacing, and volume all affect the message that you are trying to convey.

Try this:

Say this sentence out loud, emphasizing the underlined word:

- “I didn’t say you were stupid”
- “I didn’t SAY you were stupid”
- “I didn’t say YOU were stupid”
- “I didn’t say you were STUPID”


The word that you emphasize will change the meaning of what you are saying. This is para-verbal communication.



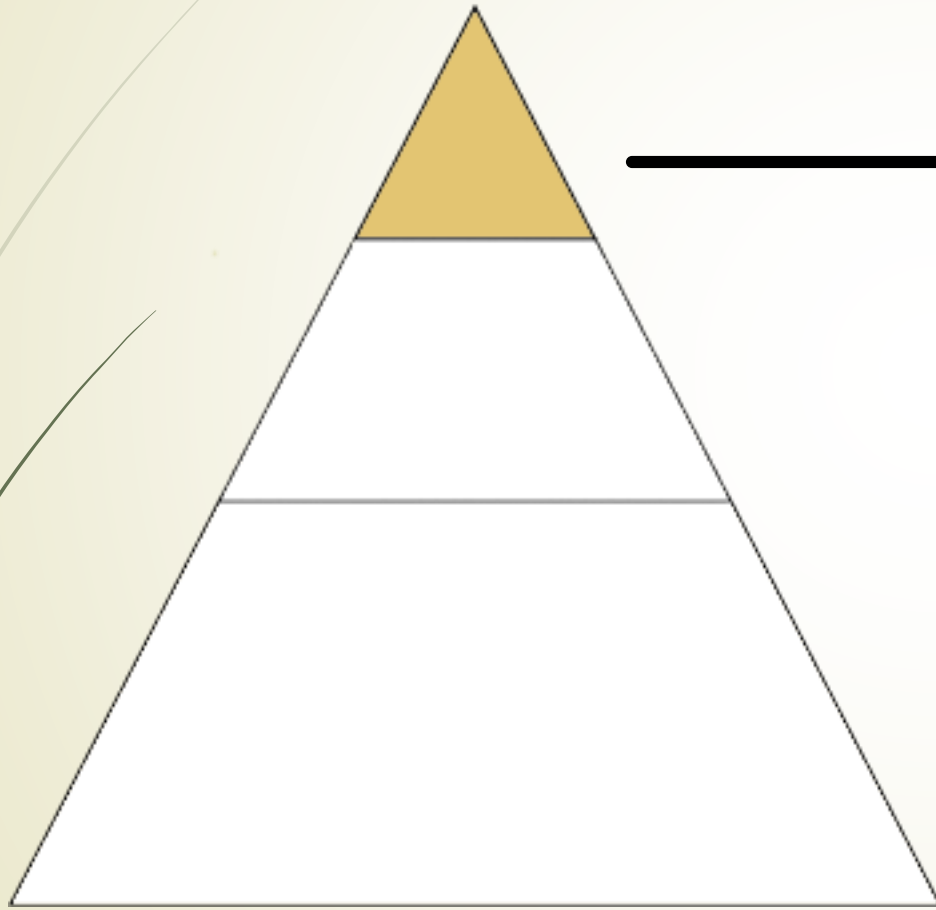
Respite Worker Response

- **If someone is starting to Ripple:**

In addition to giving him or her space, *bring down the volume of your voice*, talking in a nice, even tone.



Pyramid of Communication



Verbal Communication:
accounts for 7-10% of
perceived messages

Verbal Communication

Using words to communicate

- Verbal communication is communication through language. We remember this the *least*. The way that things are phrased is important to get a message across, and includes the details of the overall message.



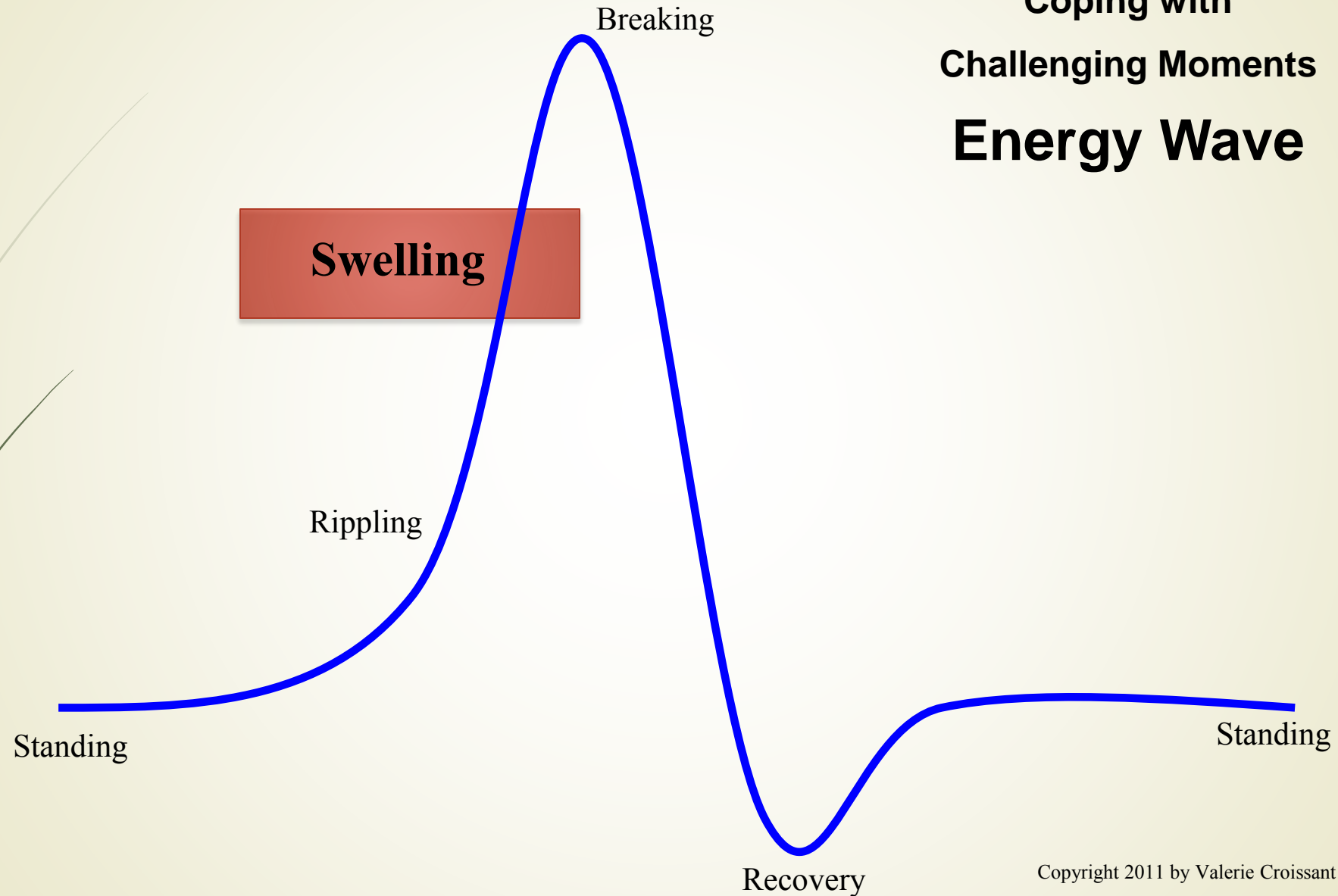
Respite Worker Response

- We talk too much. Some individuals, when starting to Ripple or Swell, need a little more time to process the words that we are saying. We need to use *short sentences*, and *give time for processing*.

Think of a dryer. You put in a few wet towels and start the dryer. After 5 minutes you stop it, and put in a few more wet towels. Another 5 minutes go by, and you add a few more towels. The towels are never going to get dry. This is the same for someone who is struggling with processing. You keep adding more, before the first set of information is processed. Sometimes *it might take up to a minute* for someone to process what you are saying, particularly if you say a few sentences.



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Swelling

“To rise in waves; to grow in amount, degree or force; to arise and grow within one, as a feeling or emotion.”

Definition and Examples:

- The individual is starting to lose control.
- This could be shown by yelling, swearing, defying, talking back, and threatening.



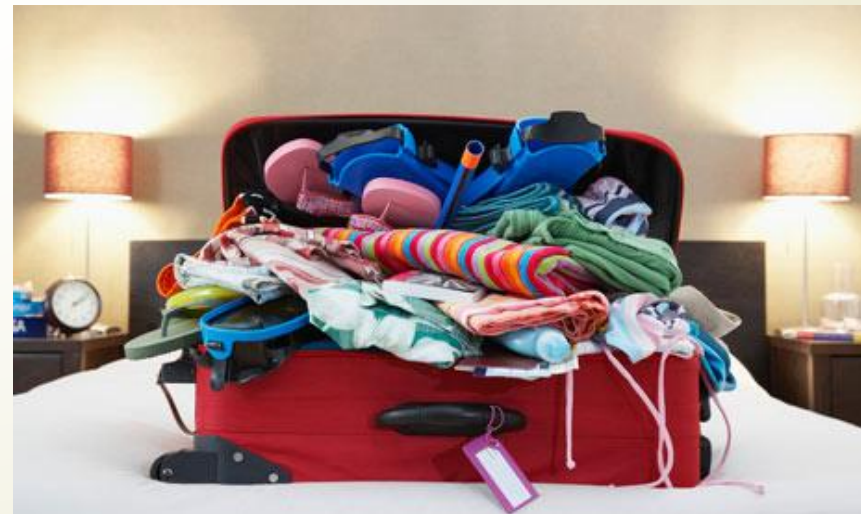
Respite Worker Response

Verbal Swelling

- **Yelling:** Stay quiet and try to talk during the lows. Make short, simple requests.
- **Defiance:** Do not get into a power struggle. Set limits and offer choices. Play the waiting game.
- **Asking questions:** Answer questions if appropriate. Watch out for questions that get you off task. Walk and talk.
- **Insults:** Do not take them personally! Try not to show a reaction. *Do not respond* in the moment; you could discuss later.
- **Threats:** Take threats seriously. Stay calm, and re-affirm their feelings. Record any threats that are made.

What's In Your Bag?

- ▶ Take a minute and think about some of the stresses in your life. Think about how these things can fill your bag when more keeps getting shoved in and in. At some point, someone will put something in your bag and cause it to burst.
- ▶ This is the same for the people that are around us. It may not be your fault - you might just happen to push that final thing in the bag that causes it to burst. We all have baggage that we are carrying around with us; some bags are more full than others.



Dementia-Specific Issues

- ▶ When looking at the functions of behavior in the elderly, and individuals with dementia or Alzheimer's, it is important to remember that the individual might be hearing, seeing or feeling things that you and I cannot hear, see or feel. Even if these things are not real to us, *they are very real to the individual.*





How Would You Feel If...

- ▶ You are asleep in a chair at home when suddenly you are awakened by a person you have never seen before, trying to undress you.
- ▶ You are feeling bored and restless at home so you decide to go out for a walk...but the front door is locked, and then a stranger appears, telling you to go and sit down.
- ▶ You are late picking up your children from school and you are in a hurry, but the person you are with won't let you go.
- ▶ Someone in the street approaches you and starts speaking a foreign language; you tell them that you don't understand, but they keep repeating themselves.
- ▶ You are feeling angry about something, but nobody around you will take your grievance seriously; they just keep telling you that everything is fine.

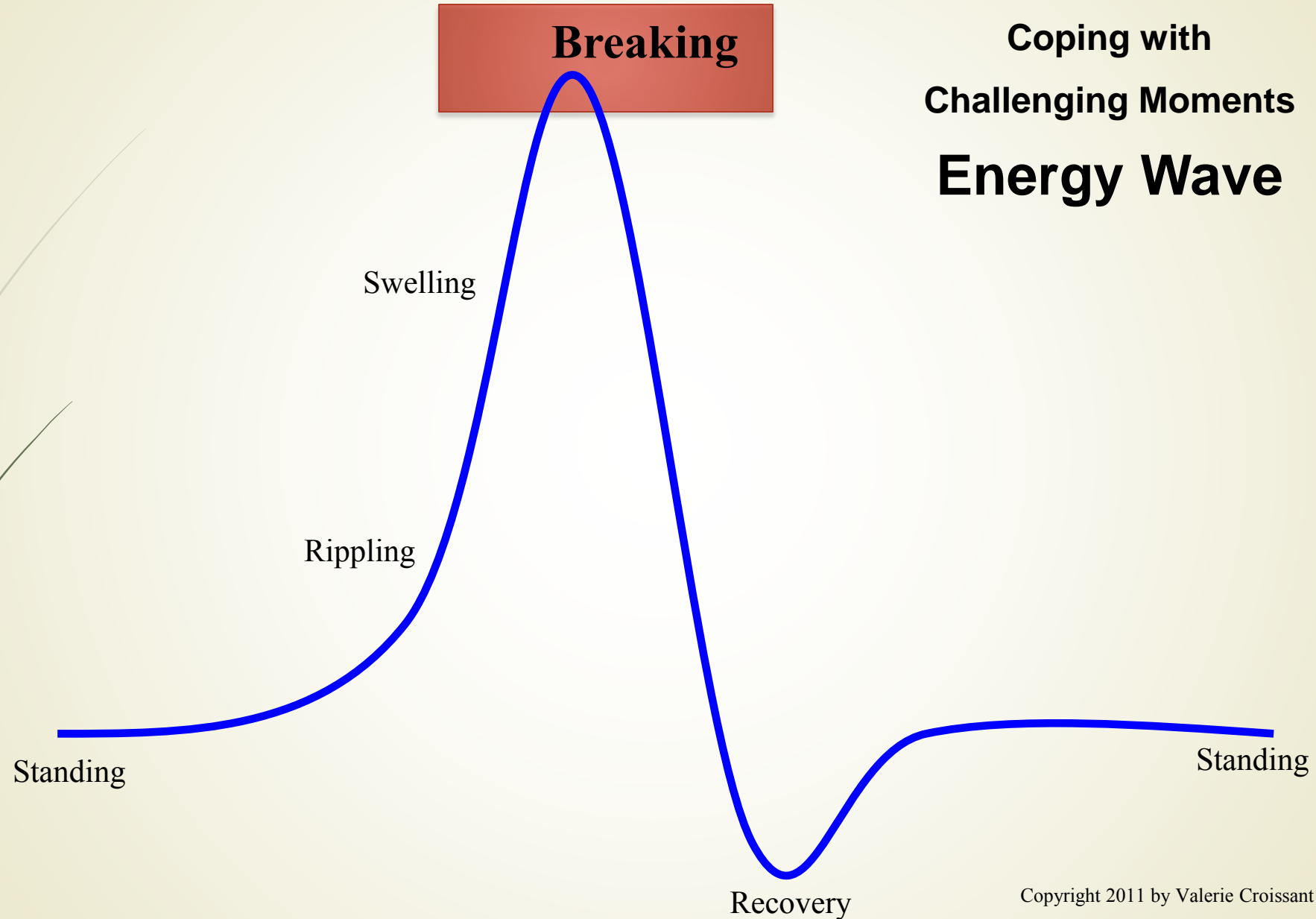


Respite Worker Response

Depending on the severity of the individual's condition, you could:

- ▶ Approach the person in the same way each time, saying your name and telling him what you are doing there
- ▶ Do not assume the person will remember you from one interaction to the next
- ▶ Be predictable, reliable and consistent
- ▶ Remember not to argue or to correct delusional beliefs
- ▶ Use re-direction to an activity that the person really enjoys
- ▶ Expand on a topic or start talking about something else

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Breaking

“To become suddenly discontinuous or interrupted; to become detached, separated, or disassociated”

Definition and Examples:

- ▶ The individual has lost rational thought and is acting in a physically aggressive or destructive manner.
- ▶ This would include: throwing things, hitting, biting, self abuse, spitting, and using objects as weapons.



Respite Worker Response

Know Yourself

- ▶ You need to be prepared for the way you might react in a stressful situation. Know what things bother you and what gets under your skin.
- ▶ Be prepared for your reactions to these feelings, and have a plan to keep them in check.

*The Most Important Thing to Remember: **GIVE SPACE***

- ▶ Often times when a person gets hit or bitten, it's because she is too close!
- ▶ Do less, rather than more. Reduce talking and movements.

Be The Horizon

- ▶ Think of a person on a boat on calm water. When things happen throughout the day (wrong food at breakfast, late for bus, substitute teacher, friend sick, iPod not charged), the waves around the boat get bigger and bigger. A storm is forming around the individual. You, as the respite provider, must *be the horizon*, the calm in the storm, the always-constant thing that is there. *Do not get on the boat*. This does not help the person get through the storm.





Responding to Aggression

Hitting/Kicking

- ▶ Take a step back! Block if you need to, but move away.

Spitting

- ▶ Put your hand up to block. Move, and try not to over-react.

Throwing Objects

- ▶ Use what you can to block the objects that are being thrown. Be aware of objects around you.

Grabbing

- ▶ Find the weak point and break through.

Biting

- ▶ Do NOT pull out! Push *into* the bite and pinch the nose shut.



Responding to Aggression

Hair Pulling

- Do NOT pull away! Push *into* the grab and work the fingers out.

Pinching/Scratching

- Do NOT pull away! Push *into* the hand, and then move away.

Choking

- Bring *arms together and up*, in between their arms, turning away at the same time.

Weapons

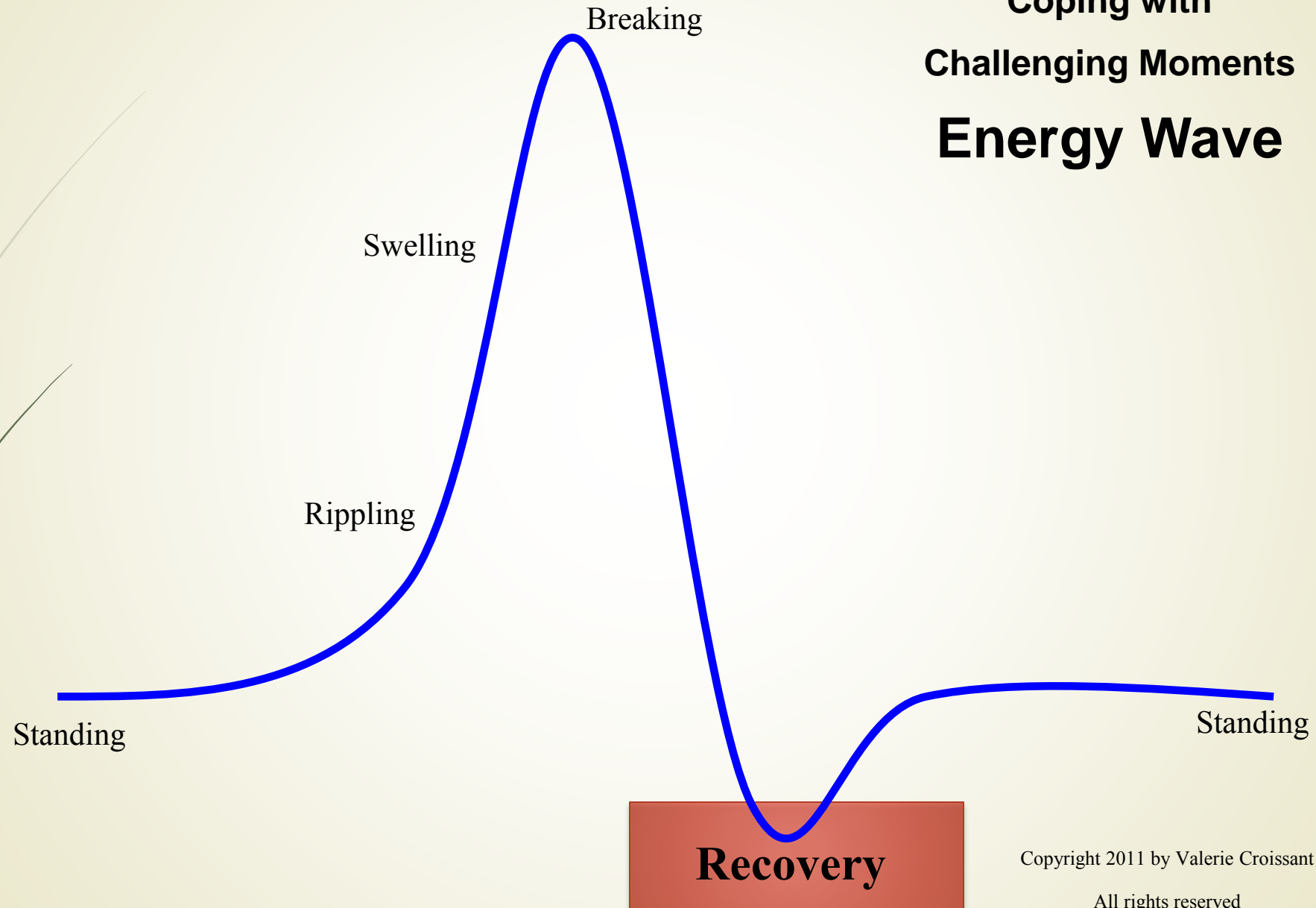
- Use your arms to *block* the weapon and see if you can get a hand on it. Move away!



Staying Safe When By Yourself

- If someone is Breaking, and to the point where he/she loses control, stay calm and try to create a plan.
- It is not smart to go hands-on by yourself. Who will come to help you? What happens if you or the individual get hurt because of you going hands-on?
- Depending on the situation, it might be best to go into the next room until the individual calms down. Always be aware of what the individual is doing, however.
- Ask the parents how to respond in these situations.

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Recovery

“The regaining of, or possibility of regaining, something lost or taken away; restoration or return to any former and better state or condition ”

Definition and Examples:

- ▶ The individual shows a decrease in energy to come back to a standing state.
- ▶ This is commonly shown by crying, sleeping, deep breaths, and relaxation of tension that has built up.



Respite Worker Response

Your Thought Process:

- ▶ After the wave, *you* need to recover as much as the individual.
- ▶ Make sure you are calm and relaxed, and plan what you are going to say and how you are going to debrief the situation with the individual.

Reconnecting:

- ▶ You are still working with the individual so you need to re-connect and let him know that you are still there for him. You might need to talk about the incident with him.
- ▶ Think through what happened and better ways you might deal with the triggers. Come up with a plan for future waves.
- ▶ Follow through on any consequences that may have come up during the wave.



Communication with Parents

- ▶ This is SO important! You must debrief the parents/caregiver about what happened.
 - ▶ Ask if they have any ideas about a different way to approach the situation, or if you handled the situation well.
 - ▶ By being honest and talking to the caregiver/parents, you build their trust and support.
- 