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REACTIONS OF THE NONDISABLED TO PRESENTATIONS OF VARIOUS DISABILITY ATTITUDES BY A DISABLED STIMULUS PERSON

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Reactions of the Nondisabled to Presentations of Various Disability Attitudes by a Disabled Stimulus Person

by

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Introduction

Statement of the Problem

There is a growing body of research which is devoted to the study of interactions between the stigmatized and the nonstigmatized. In this research, the stigmatized are most often denoted as individuals with physical disabilities, although members of racial minority groups (e.g., Katz, Glass, and Cohen, 1976) the mentally ill (e.g., Farina, Holland, and Ring, 1966; Farina and Ring, 1968), and others have also been included (e.g., Freedman and Doob, 1968). This study will be concerned with reactions to the physically disabled.

In studies of interactions between the disabled and the nondisabled, it has sometimes been found that nondisabled subjects react with signs of internal conflict, discomfort and avoidance of the disabled, but may also display kindness toward the disabled and evaluate them more favorably than other nondisabled persons (Kleck, 1966, 1968; Kleck, Ono, and Hastorf, 1966). In short, in accordance with the ambivalence-amplification theory of Katz and Glass (1979) it would seem that attitudes towards the disabled are typically ambivalent and behavior towards them may sometimes be

erratic and extreme. The purpose of this study is to further explore the causes of negative reactions to the physically disabled by the nondisabled. This study is concerned with one possible factor underlying the documented discomfort and avoidance reactions of the nondisabled person in situations of contact with a disabled other. That factor is the latter's explicitly stated attitude towards his disability. A conflict model is presented to explain the effects of these different disability-attitudes. Because the nature of attitudes and reactions to the disabled are poorly understood and have only recently been the subject of scientific investigations, the intent of the present study is not to specifically lend support to the conflict model over other possible explanations of negative reactions to the disabled. The conflict model is only one model discernable in the literature on reactions to the disabled. It seems to be able to explain the expected effects of the different disability-attitudes, and is presented by and large for heuristic purposes. The main contribution of the present study is that it broadens the systematic study of factors which are related to the occurrence of negative reactions to the disabled (a) by investigating the effects of different disability-attitudes expressed by the disabled, (b) by the use of different dependent measures, and (c) by the use of a nondisabled comparison group.

Review of Previous Research

Negative attitudes towards the disabled. Reviewers of the research literature often conclude that while verbalized attitudes toward the disabled tend to be positive, deeper, unconscious feelings are often negative and rejecting (Barker, Wright, Myerson, and Gonick, 1953; Wright, 1960; Goffman, 1960).

Evidence for the existence of negative attitudes toward the disabled comes from three main areas: anecdotal reports by the disabled themselves; content analyses of various cultural products such as jokes, works of fiction and religious documents; and the more systematic methods of scientific inquiry.

Because of the biases inherent in anecdotal evidence this material will be described very briefly. Accounts written by several reviewers of this literature state that the disabled often report feeling they are treated as social inferiors,as objects of pity and scorn, and as persons to be avoided or ignored by the nondisabled majority. Leviton, Adler, and Dembo (1948) offer the following quotations from their interviews wth 125 visibly injured persons (mostly amputees) which describe how the disabled feel they are perceived and treated by the nondisabled.

> Pity, repulsion, surprise, horror...they have a feeling of distaste - that's the first impression. (p. 147)

> A lot of people feel sorry, think you're a cripple, and look down in a very severe way. (p. 147)

> Some people will look at you as though they have a sorry look. Other people will look at you as if in contempt. (p. 148)

Similar observations are to be found in the account of an individual lacking full use of his legs (Wright, 1960).

> I knew that legs should be stout and shapely and that mine are skinny and deformed. I knew that I should walk and could not. I learned that I was a cripple, a pariah among the strong and straight, an object of pity to grown-ups and of scorn to children. (p. 29)

Turning to the analysis of cultural products, Barker et al. (1953) analyzed the contents of jokes about various groups and found that jokes about the disabled were derogatory or ridiculing in nature much more often than jokes about other groups such as judges, salesmen and dentists. Similarly, in an analysis of the portrayal of the blind in works of fiction Barker et al. concluded that the characterization of a normal well adjusted blind person is extremely rare. Most often, the blind are characterized as either abnormally good or, somewhat less often, as abnormally bad. Furthermore, an examination of Judeo-Christian religious writings provides evidence that "...disability and illness are linked to causes of a negative, evil signification" (Wright, 1960 p 259). No less than 142 bodily imperfections including lameness, blindness and broken bones are enumerated by Talmudists as disqualifying a priest from officiating (Hentig, 1948 cited

by Wright, 1960). Furthermore, "it was a strict commandment of the Old Testament that 'the blind and the lame shall not come into the house'" (according to Wright, 1960 p 259).

Finally, we come to the evidence of negative attitudes towards the disabled gathered by the methods of systematic scientific inquiry. All of these studies are based on questionnaire data. The evidence shows that the disabled are more subject to attitudes indicative of greater avoidance and social distance than nondisabled persons. In one study using high school students (Siller, 1963) it was reported that only nine percent of the sample indicated they would accept a physically disabled person as a spouse. An earlier study using a college population (Rusk and Taylor, 1946) showed similar results though not as strongly negative. Sixty-five percent of the sample in the Rusk and Taylor study indicated they would not marry an amputee and fifty percent said they would not even date one. Similarly, in a study by Tringo (1970), a number of disabled groups including paraplegics were rated as unacceptable as next door neighbors by a sample of high school, college, and graduate students, and health care workers.

Negative reactions to the disabled. Avoidance of the disabled has also been demonstrated in situations of actual contact between a nondisabled subject and a confederate pretending to be disabled. In a field study conducted at an airport, it was found that subjects maintained greater

physical distance from a confederate who was asking for directions when the confederate was seated in a wheelchair than when he was not (Worthington, 1974). In a laboratory study (Kleck, 1969) in which a subject had to teach a confederate the Japanese art of paper folding (Origami) it was found that subjects maintained greater physical distance when the confederate was seated in a wheelchair than when he was not. It has also been found that a person who had stumbled and fallen in a New York City subway received less assistance from bystanders when he displayed a 'port wine stain' facial birthmark than when he did not (Piliavin, Piliavin, and Rodin, 1975). Similarly, in a study by Doob and Ecker (1970),a confederate wearing an eyepatch going door-to-door asking housewives to assist in an industrial survey received greater compliance than a confederate not wearing an eye-patch but only when compliance did not require close contact (i.e., filling out and mailing a questionnaire). When compliance did require close contact (i.e., a fifteen to twenty minute interview) the compliance rates did not differ. The authors argue that the results are consistent with the hypothesis that while subjects would prefer to avoid close contact with the disabled they also feel under great pressure to comply with a request when it comes from a disadvantaged person.

The remaining studies on negative reactions to the disabled in one way or another demonstrate that the

nondisabled feel conflicted, inhibited and uncomfortable in initial contact situations with the disabled. Note that there is an important distinction to be made between the use of the term "negative reactions" in the following studies and its use in the studies reviewed above. In the previous studies "negative reactions" refers to behaviors exhibited by nondisabled persons which indicated a desire to avoid contact with the disabled. In the studies that follow, however, the term "negative reactions" is not necessarily intended to connote the existence of a desire to avoid the disabled, but rather it is used to describe the quality of the reactions that the nondisabled have in contact situations with the disabled. In other words, it is assumed that discomfort, conflict, and inhibition which are common reactions of the nondisabled when placed in interaction situations with the disabled, are likely to be experienced as negative and aversive stimuli by the person experiencing them.

In one study (Kleck et al., 1966) nondisabled subjects were placed in face-to-face contact with a confederate who either did or did not sit in a wheelchair. Subjects were told the experiment was about physiological reactions during face-to-face interviews and accordingly electrodes were attached to the subject. First, subjects were asked to pick, from a list, questions they would like to ask of the confederate. Then, through a rigged lottery, the

confederate was always selected to be the interviewer. However, as an apparent preliminary to the main task, the subject and the confederate were asked to exchange some general information about each other. Each was then required to ask the other about the importance of four areas in the process of forming impressions about people. The four areas were academic achievement, sports, religion and physical appearance. The subject was asked to spontaneously express his own thoughts on the importance of each area and also to rate the importance of each one on a seven point scale. Results showed that when the interviewer was disabled subjects had lower skin resistance, took longer to choose the questions they wanted to ask (indicating conflict), showed less variability in their responses and terminated the interaction sooner than when the interviewer was not disabled. There was also a statistically non-significant tendency for subjects to choose fewer questions when they thought they would be asking them of a disabled person. The authors point out that lowered skin resistance has been associated with behavioral uncertainty (Mason, 1941), affective conflict (Lanier, 1941) and stress (Baker and Taylor, 1954). In a study using a very similiar methodology (Kleck, 1966) it was reported that subjects felt more discomfort and displayed greater signs of motoric inhibition when interacting with a disabled confederate than when interacting with a nondisabled confederate.

Positive reactions to the disabled. The term "positive reactions" as used with respect to the following studies means an overt behavioral disposition to act kindly towards the disabled and to be receptive to their presumed needs. A closer examination of the above mentioned studies conducted by Kleck and his associates will show that while negative responses to the disabled occurred so also did positive ones.

In the same study in which it was reported that subjects showed lower skin resistance, less variability in verbal behavior and terminated the interaction sooner when interacting with a disabled confederate (Kleck et al.,1966), it was also reported that these same subjects distorted their opinions about the importance of sports, physical appearance, religion, and academic achievement. Subjects distorted their opinions in the direction of being in greater accord with the attitudes the disabled can be assumed to have towards these areas. Specifically, subjects devalued the importance of sports and physical appearance and gave greater emphasis to academic achievement when the interviewer was disabled than when he was not. Furthermore, if the situation was such that subjects thought they were helping the confederate by continuing the interaction, subjects stayed longer with a disabled interviewer than with a nondisabled interviewer. Similarly, the study that reported greater motoric inhibition (Kleck, 1968) also

reported this same type of opinion distortion in the disability condition. Also, the disabled confederate was rated more favorably on various traits (e.g., friendly, intelligent, attractive, likeable, responsible, warm), than the nondisabled confederate.

Finally, this same study showed that subjects maintained greater eye contact when the confederate appeared to be disabled than when he did not. This phenomenon was explained as a function of the "information seeking" purpose of eye contact (Argyle & Dean,1968). That is, the authors speculated that the subjects did not know how to behave and so increased their level of eye contact to monitor how the physically handicapped confederate was reacting to them in order to better regulate their own behavior. They also speculated that when involved in an interaction with a disabled person the need for information of this sort may be particularly acute because subjects feel the need to be especially responsive to the needs of a disabled person. Together with the opinion distortion finding, this pattern suggests that subjects are monitoring the impact of their behaviors to avoid doing anything which might be upsetting to the disabled interactant.

Positive attitudes towards the disabled. The finding that the disabled are evaluated more favorably than the nondisabled using impression rating questionnaires can be referred to as the 'positivity effect' and is well

documented in the literature (Jaffe, 1967; Ray, 1946; Mussen and Barker, 1944; Strong, 1931). Ray (1946) for example, asked high school students to assign personality characteristics to individuals depicted in photographs. For one group of subjects one of the individuals in the photographs was shown to be sitting in a wheelchair, while for another group of subjects the wheelchair was not shown. The result was that when depicted as crippled as compared to able-bodied, the stimulus person was judged to be more conscientious, to be a better friend, to be more even tempered, to be a better class president, and to be more religious. However, he was also seen to be be more unhappy, to feel more inferior, and to like parties less. Similarly, using an undergraduate college population Mussen and Barker (1944) showed that "cripples" were more favorably rated than an estimate of ratings for the average person on ten of twenty-four personality characteristics and less favorably on four items. The positivity effect has even been reported to occur when the personality of the disabled person has been presented as relatively negative. In one study (Carver, Glass, and Katz, 1976) subjects were asked to rate an interview transcript in which the interviewee was portrayed as a college student from a lower class background who had few friends, no particular interests, and no plans for the future. If in addition the interviewee was identified as sitting in a wheelchair he was rated more

positively on eleven trait dimensions than if he was not identified as disabled. Finally, as reported earlier, in situations of actual contact disabled confederates are more favorably rated than nondisabled confederates (Kleck, 1968).

Conflict, Inhibition and Uncertainty as Explanations of Negative Reactions

To explain the general pattern of findings in their studies, Kleck and his associates repeatedly mention the following factors: 1) the situation of face-to-face contact with a disabled person is uncommon and strange to the nondisabled; 2) there is a general norm in American culture of kindness and compassion towards the disadvantaged; 3) the nondisabled do not know how to behave in accordance with the norm of kindness in this unusual situation;and 4) as a consequence, the nondisabled feel conflicted and uncomfortable. Kleck and his associates conclude that subjects consequently inhibit their behavior and seek to avoid close contact with the disabled and, in deference to the norm of kindness, rate the disabled more favorably than other nondisabled persons, and distort their opinions about topics which might otherwise be disturbing to the disabled.

This formulation seems to be a plausible explanation for many of the negative reactions of the nondisabled. However, it can be improved if the concepts of novelty and curiosity are given greater prominence. Langer et al., (1976) have

presented a novel stimulus hypothesis to account for the conflicted and negative responses of the nondisabled. She has hypothesized an explanation for the existence of simultaneous approach and avoidance tendencies toward the physically handicapped. For Langer, the physically handicapped person (operationally defined in some of her studies as a woman wearing a leg brace) has all the properties of a novel stimulus in that the person arouses curiosity. It was hypothesized that the avoidance of the physically handicapped, documented in other studies, is a symptom of a conflict over the desire to stare at the novel stimulus (i.e., curiosity) and a simultaneous desire to adhere to the social norm against staring at an object of curiosity when it is another person. An approach/avoidance conflict then develops and manifests itself in all the conflict behavior (increased discomfort, increased arousal, inhibition, etc.) previously documented. As experimental evidence, Langer et al. report a study in which half of the subjects were given the opportunity to view, through a one-way mirror, a physicaly handicapped person with whom they knew they would soon be interacting. It was hypothesized that these subjects would satiate their curiosity and would therefore feel less conflicted. Consequently, they would sit closer to the physically handicapped confederate. Indeed, this is what happened. It is unfortunate that seating distance was the only dependent measure. It would have been interesting to see how pre-contact exposure

affected some of the variables used in Kleck's studies, such as length of verbal interaction, motoric inhibition, eye contact and impression ratings. Indeed, it may be that the pre-contact exposure reduced novelty, not in the sense that curiosity needs were satiated, but rather simply in that it made the physically handicapped person more of a known quantity. Subjects had time to develop an impression of the physically handicapped confederate as a person, to compose themselves and plan an acceptable mode of response in accordance with the norm of not openly expressing any negative, rejecting attitudes toward the disabled. However, if there is any validity to the novelty and curiosity notions, then any expression of an attitude by the physically handicapped which openly brings the disability into the foreground as an acceptable object of attention should make the subject more comfortable because it reconciles the curiosity he presumably feels with the norm against staring at other people.

Davis (1961) has presented an approach/avoidance model which is similiar to Langer's but is more general in several respects. Based on interviews with various disabled persons, Davis writes:

> ..the normal, while having his attention so narrowly channeled [on the disability], is immediately constrained by the requirements of sociability to act as if he were oriented to the totality of the other rather than to that which is uppermost in his awareness, i.e. the handicap. (p. 123)

Furthermore,Davis feels that it is this discrepancy between the actor's inner state and the social expectation that leads to the familiar signs of discomfort 'the guarded references, the common everyday words suddenly made taboo, the fixed stare elsewhere, the artificial levity, the compulsive loquaciousness, the awkward solemnity'.

Although the avoidance elements in Davis' and Langer's formulations are somewhat similiar (it is forbidden to focus attention on another person's differentness) Davis does not rely on the statistical infrequency of novelty to account for the approach element but instead substitutes any element which intrudes into the interactional field. That is, any element which intrudes into the interactional field has the ability to draw attention to itself. Furthermore, the behavioral restriction in Davis' formulation is not limited to staring behavior. It also extends to verbal behavior. One basic premise of this thesis is that the disability does intrude into the interactional field and elicits precisely the type of conflict Davis theorizes.

To summarize thus far, it would seem that the tension and avoidance behavior sometimes shown by the nondisabled in face-to-face contacts with the disabled may arise, at least in part, from the former's efforts to adhere to the prevalent norm of kindness and compassion toward the disabled. The previous studies suggest that in his wish not

to do anything which might hurt the feelings of a disabled person, the nondisabled actor monitors and inhibits his responses to the point where he feels very uncomfortable. For example, he may wish to look at or discuss the disability but feels he cannot. Furthermore, although the nondisabled may want to be protective and helpful to the disabled because they have had relatively little exposure to such persons they may not know how to behave; hence, inhibition, discomfort and avoidance tendencies develop, as demonstrated in Kleck's studies.

The central conflict seems to be between the nondisabled person's aroused curiosity and a norm of not doing anything which brings attention to another's shortcomings. Note, however, that the notion of curiosity as the result of novelty defined as statistical infrequency is not essential. As Davis points out, any characteristic which intrudes into the interactional field will draw attention to itself regardless of how common or uncommon it is. The intrusion of a disability is assumed to cause greater conflict than other intrusions because it not only clashes with a general norm of not staring at other people but it also clashes with a powerful norm requiring sensitivity to the disabled. This norm of kindness may take the form of not doing anything which draws attention to another's shortcomings, including both verbal and nonverbal behavior.

It should be clear that sensitivity to the needs of the disabled can mean many things. For example, it may imply the performance of instrumental acts such as helping the blind to cross the street. However, the present study is concerned with sensitivity which takes the form of avoiding reference to the disability itself, or avoiding any subject or activity which draws attention to the disability. This seems to be the type of sensitivity which the subjects in Kleck's studies exhibited. The idea of conflict as a result of contact with a novel stimulus would, therefore, seem more appropriate in situations where staring might highlight another's shortcomings and thus possibly cause that person humiliation and embarrassment. Similarly, if eye contact can perhaps cause the target stimulus person to feel uncomfortable then certainly an explicit reference to the forbidden topic could also cause discomfort. This is something the nondisabled person is believed to want to avoid because it clashes with the norm of showing kindness to the disabled.

If this analysis is correct then we would expect the nondisabled individual to feel less anxiety and discomfort in a situation where he feels some relief from the norm of receptiveness to the needs of the disabled.

The effects of open acknowledgement of disability. In the present study an attempt is made to relieve the nondisabled of having to display this one type of

sensitivity by having an apparently disabled confederate bring his disability into the foreground of attention by verbally acknowledging the existence of the disability and its appropriateness as a topic of discussion. Presumably, once a disabled person has voluntarily brought the disability into the conversation the nondisabled should no longer feel he must avoid addressing it, and should therefore experience less conflict and hence less discomfort in the interaction situation than if he were in an interaction situation with a disabled person who made no such statement. However, it is also speculated that a disabled person can bring his disability into the foreground of attention in such a way that it increases the subject's level of conflict and hence increases discomfort and avoidance. More specifically, it is hypothesized that an attitude of self-pity expressed by a disabled person will occasion greater anxiety, discomfort and avoidance behavior than will the attitude of open acknowledgement.

No studies could be found which directly examined the effects of the expression of a self-pitying attitude by a disabled person on the reactions of a nondisabled other. Only two published studies were found which examined the effects of a disabled person's open acknowedgement of disability on the reactions of the nondisabled. In an experiment by Farina, Sherman, and Allen (1968), nonhandicapped subjects were placed in a learning situation

with a confederate who either was or was not seated in a wheelchair. The subject was supposed to teach the confederate a specific code, administering electric shocks as punishment for incorrect responses. The subject could control the intensity and duration of the shocks. Prior to the start of the learning session both subject and confederate were instructed to exchange some voluntary information about themselves. The real subject always went first. The information to be presented was restricted to one of four topics: interests, social life,problems in college, and negative aspects of one's personality. The subject's statements were recorded and the following measures were taken: length of time he spoke, the number of disruptions which appeared in his speech, the length of time he was silent, and the ratio of silent time to speaking time. When it was time for the confederate to present some information about himself he included one of the following statements. In the acknowledgement condition he said that "his leg obviously caused him problems in getting about,etc., and he indicated it had been caused by an auto accident" (p. 591). The authors expected this manipulation to "(modify) the influence of stigmata on interpersonal relationships" (p. 590). However, specific predictions about how this manipulation would affect the dependent variables were not made. In the no acknowledgement condition, "the confederate brusquely stated that he had the

same problems as other people" (p. 591). This condition was intended to make the stigma a "forbidden topic".

No differences between any of the groups were found on the shock intensity measure but it was found that the confederate received shocks of lesser duration in the wheelchair condition than in the no wheelchair condition. There were no effects of acknowledgement of disability on any dependent variables.

The principal shortcoming of this study lies in the acknowledgement manipulation. Farina et al. speculated that the critical difference between the acknowledgement and the no acknowledgement conditions was that in the former subjects would perceive the confederate as someone who was quite willing to discuss his disability openly, while in the latter condition the subjects would perceive the confederate as someone who felt the disability was a forbidden topic. However, there is nothing in the acknowledgement manipulation explicitly about the acceptability of the disability as a topic of discussion. The confederate merely mentioned that his disability caused him inconveniences and was caused by a car accident. As Hastorf,Wildfogel, and Cassman (1979) have pointed out "Such a statement, rather than implying that the handicap is an acceptable topic of conversation, may indicate that the topic has been opened and closed" (p. 1791).

In contrast, another study (Hastorf et al.,1979) has reported results in the expected direction as a consequence of disability acknowledgement on the part of the handicapped stimulus person. In all, three experiments were reported. In each experiment, subjects watched video-tape recordings of interviews with two different stimulus persons both of whom appeared to be confined to wheelchairs. The dependent variables were always the same, preference for the stimulus person as a co-worker on a task at a future date, and favorableness of impression ratings of the stimulus persons. In Experiment 1 it was found that disabled confederates who openly acknowledged their disability and explicitly stated they were amenable to talking about it were more often preferred as future work partners and made a more favorable impression than disabled confederates making no such statement.

To rule out the possibility that the effectiveness of the acknowledgement manipulation was due to the increased feelings of intimacy and liking which generally accompany personal disclosure (Jourard, 1971; Worthy et al.,1969), a second experiment was conducted. It was found that disabled confederates who acknowledged their disability and invited discussion (although no discussion ever actually took place), were preferred and made better impressions than similarly disabled confederates who made significant personal disclosures that were unrelated to the disability

itself. In the third and final experiment it was shown that an acknowledging disabled person was preferred over a nonacknowledging disabled person as a future partner even when the former's nonverbal behavior indicated nervousness and discomfort. The interpretation of the general pattern of results was that "subjects were more certain how to act with the confederate acknowledging a handicap because his communication in acknowledging made it clear what behavior was appropriate" (p. 1797). Thus, subjects felt more comfortable with this person. To explain why the acknowledging confederate made a more favorable impression, Hastorf et al. call upon the ambivalence amplification hypothesis of Katz and Glass (1979). According to Hastorf et al. the ambivalence-amplification hypothesis rests on the premise that attitudes towards the disabled (and other stigmatized groups) are basically ambivalent, and that ambivalence leads to a tendency towards behavioral instability. As a result, any positive input amplifies favorable attitudes while any negative input amplifies unfavorable attitudes. Hastorf e al. speculate that "Acknowledgement of the handicap...was positive information because it reduced discomfort. Therefore, it amplifed favorable impressions of the acknowledging confederates" (p. 1796).

The results of this study and the explanations offered are totally consistent with views presented in this paper.

The present study is an outgrowth of the Hartorf et al. study in the sense that it seeks to broaden the exploration of the relationship between a disabled person's attitude towards his disability and the reactions of nondisabled persons. The study of this relationship is broadened by the addition of different dependent variables, a different type of attitude towards the disability, and the introduction of a physically normal confederate as another comparison condition.

In another somewhat related study, Katz et al. (1979), varied the personal qualities displayed by disabled and nondisabled confederates and measured the effect on normal observer's compliance to requests for help. Note, however, that these "personal qualities" were not in the form of explicit attitudes about the disability but rather were more general personality characterisitics. The study is included in this review because it is one of very few studies which used the approach of varying some aspect of a disabled person's self presentation and measuring its effects on the reactions of the nondisabled. Furthermore, it is particularly relevant to the discussion of the effects of the self-pity manipulation.

Based on the ambivalence-amplification theory (see Katz & Glass, 1979) Katz et al. initially predicted that "physically disabled help seekers will receive more aid from

normal people than will normal help-seekers when both types of actors display positive personal qualities,whereas the reverse outcome will occur when both display negative qualities". The actual results, however, were the exact reverse of those predicted. At this point it was realized that what constitutes "positive personal qualities" may not be the same for both disabled and nondisabled persons. The authors referred to the work of Goffman (1960) and Dembo et al. (1956), which suggests that the nondisabled have very definite ideas about how the disabled should adjust to their situation. Specifically, the disabled person is expected to realize that he is in a state of deprivation and to suffer. Katz et al. speculated that subjects exposed to the "friendly and achievement oriented" handicapped confederate (in the positive personal qualities condition) might have interpreted the positive qualities as an attempt to deny differentness, deprivation and suffering. They further speculated that this deviation from the expected had generated anger against the confederate which was manifested as a relatively lower level of helping behavior in this condition as compared with the amount of help given to the confederate in the other conditions. In a follow up study the hypothesis that friendly and achievement oriented handicapped persons would elicit anger was confirmed. Some support was also found for the complementary hypothesis that the "caustic and apathetic" behaviors of the physically

handicapped confederate in the negative self-presentation condition were interpreted as understandable reactions to the pain and suffering associated with disability, hence elicited compassion.

The effects of self-pity. In addition to studying the effects of open acknowledgement of disability, the present study examines how the attitude of self-pity as expressed by the disabled affects the nondisabled. It is important to point out that the purpose of this study is more theoretical than practical. There is no intent to imply that the disabled habitually present themselves in a self-pitying manner and are thus the cause of negative reactions by the nondisabled.

Again there is almost no experimental data on this issue. Goffman (1960) writes that the stigmatized person is supposed to

> fulfill ordinary standards as fully as he can,stopping short only when the issue of normification arises; that is, when his efforts might give the impression he is trying to deny his differentness...and because normals have their troubles too, the stigmatized should not feel bitter,resentful or self pitying. A cheerful outgoing manner should be cultivated. (pp. 115-116)

Thus, if Goffman is correct, the expression of self-pity should increase tension and anxiety on the part of a nondisabled observer and increase interpersonal distance. Goffman, however, does not explain any further why a display of self-pity should occasion negative reactions. The

expected effects of the self-pity manipulation are open to various explanations. First, as Goffman implies, it may simply contradict the expectation maintained by the nondisabled that the disabled should be miserable (Dembo et al., 1956) but at the same time not complain too loudly about their plight. Thus, role expectations are unfulfilled, the interaction is disrupted and requires the expenditure of energy to adjust it. Second, subjects may react negatively because a self-pitying attitude enhances the fear of getting enmeshed in another person's dependency needs (Katz, 1979). Becoming enmeshed in another's dependency needs may be aversive because it may lead to a reduction of freedom (reactance) or because it requires extra effort to try to satisfy the other's dependency needs. Third, there is also the possibility of some sort of emotional contagion (as suggested by some of the literature on empathy). Proximity to someone expressing a negative emotion (such as self-pity) may cause others around him to feel the same way, obviously something to be avoided.

One study (Isen and Noonberg, 1979) has reported differential rates of contribution to a charity which is consistent with the reactance model. It was found that in a door-to-door collection appeal on behalf of the March of Dimes, smaller donations were made when the request for a donation was accompanied by the display of either a smiling handicapped child, an unsmiling handicapped child or the

March of Dimes logo and the words "birth defects are forever unless you help", than when the appeal was accompanied by a sign with only the words "The March of Dimes" on it. It is possible that the poster of the handicapped child (either smiling or unsmiling) and the statement "Birth defects are forever unless you help" were perceived by the subjects as an attempt to manipulate them (perhaps through guilt), to which the subjects responded with resentment and hostility and hence made smaller donations. However, the authors also suggest another possible explanation. They suggest that the poster and the logo were more complex forms of stimuli than the simpler "March of Dimes" statement, and that the former more complex stimuli distracted the subjects from the core of the message (a request for donations) and hence resulted in smaller donations.

Another plausible explanation for the negative effects of self-pity is that the heightened apparent neediness of the disabled confederate increases the pressure on the subjects to be responsive to the disabled person's needs, which for various reasons already outlined increases conflict and will bring about a corresponding increase in anxiety, discomfort, and avoidance.

While the self-pity manipulation in the present study is expected to produce negative responses no specific hypothesis about the underlying mechanism is offered. Note,

however, that if the reactance model is operative we may expect greater levels of hostility in the self-pity group than in any of the other groups.

Other Explanations for Negative Reactions to the Disabled

The most prevalent approach to the study of reactions to the disabled is the "stigma" approach (cf Goffman, 1960; Barker et al., 1953; Wright, 1960; English, 1971). Stigma, as Goffman defines it, refers to the possession of a deeply discrediting trait. Furthermore, a stigmatized person is perceived to be flawed, deficient or inferior. The core of this approach seems to rest on the premise that the possession of a particular trait (e.g., black skin, physical disability), which in and of itself may or may not be negative, can lead to a generalized negative evaluation of the person possessing the trait. Subsequent discomfort about and avoidance of the stigmatized person is associated with the stereotyped negative qualities imputed to the person. This stereotype may not be justified by the actual properties inherent in the stigmatizing trait.

Strictly speaking, the stigma model does not require that the stigmatizing attribute be inherently negative in nature. Race and nationality, for example, are not inherently debilitating or negative but sometimes do form the basis for negative stereotyping and derogation. Underlying mechanisms for the process of stigmatization in cases where the

stigmatizing attribute is not inherently negative have been suggested by Katz (1979). These models, which are in general based on notions of scapegoating and intergroup dynamics, do not seem to be as useful in understanding reactions to the physically disabled as they are for understanding reactions to other groups such as racial minorities. However, when the attribute is at least in some respects negative or debilitating (such as physical disabilities) then the attribute as sufficient cause model of stigmatization also described by Katz (1979) does seem to be very useful. Katz writes:

> The attribute-as-sufficient-cause model also makes the assumption that basic cognitive-perceptual tendencies can strengthen the linkage between recognition of an aversive characteristic and rejection of the possessor. Heider's (1944) principles of naive perception are relevant. His notion of cognitive balance suggests that a stranger who displays a strongly negative attribute will tend to be seen as having other negative attributes as well. (p. 450)

Based on this type of reasoning Wright (1960) hypothesizes that physical disability produces a "spread phenomenon" which negatively influences the perception of the disabled person's other characteristics and thereby causes him to be devalued. Similarly, English (1971) stresses that it is this process of generalization which turns physical disability into personal, vocational, and social handicaps. The attribute-as-sufficient-cause stigma model would for example explain why the disabled may be seen as morally tainted and the disability seen as either a punishment for

some transgression or as a product of evil forces (Sontag, 1978; Hentig, 1948; McDaniel, 1969).

Another variation of the attribute as sufficient cause model states that some inherent aversive aspect of the attribute directly elicits negative reactions. Katz (1979) summarizes a model offered by Hebb (1949) which states that

> discrepancies between expectation (i.e., adaptation level) and perception give rise to primary unlearned affect, the sign of which will depend upon the size of the discrepancy. Relatively small discrepancies from expectation are supposed to yield positive or pleasant affect, whereas large discrepancies are supposed to result in negative affect or unpleasantness. (p. 451)

Hebb (1944) has presented a physiological model based on the arousal of incompatible neural responses to explain the emergence of 'unlearned affect'.

The conflict model developed earlier in this chapter differs from the stigma approach in that it does not require that the disabled person be generally devalued, discredited and negatively stereotyped in order to account for discomfort and avoidance on the part of nondisabled persons. The conflict model does to some extent imply that the disabled person is stereotyped (e.g., that he is seen as someone who is in need of sympathy and other acts of kindness); but it does not require that he be stigmatized. As Katz and Glass (1979) point out "the empirical evidence regarding the existence of negative attitudes (towards the disabled) is less compelling than that for positive

attitudes" . Evidence has been presented which suggests that the disabled are avoided more than the nondisabled and cause subjects to feel more discomfort, but avoidance and discomfort can just as likely be the result of conflict as the result of underlying negative attitudes. Indeed, attitudinal studies, as pointed out earlier, generally show that the disabled are rated very favorably. One could also argue that the disabled differ from other more clearly stigmatized groups such as blacks in that the disabled do not define themselves as a cohesive subgroup in opposition to the dominant majority. Further, the disabled lack a central symbol (cf Allport, 1954) as a perceptual focus which supports the perception of characterological homogeneity.

Another explanation of the negativeness of the reactions of the nondisabled lies in the possibility that in interpersonal contact situations the disabled have behaved in ways which have directly caused the nondisabled to feel uncomfortable and therefore want to avoid the disabled in the future. The amount of research on this point is very meager. However, one possibility is that the disabled by their own actions contribute to the problem, either through the expression of their own discomfort in contact situations or by behaving in ways which the nondisabled find difficult to handle. Using a research design similar to Kleck's, Comer and Piliavin (1972) report that in a face-to-face interview situation

> physically handicapped subjects interacting with a physically normal interviewer, as compared to subjects interacting with a physicaly disabled interviewer, (a) terminated the interactions sooner, (b) showed greater motoric inhibitions, (c) exhibited less smiling behavior, (d) demonstrated less eye contact with the interviewer, and (e) admitted feeling less comfortable during the interaction. (p. 33)

Interestingly, these are by and large the very same responses exhibited by the nondisabled subjects in Kleck's studies when they interacted with disabled confederates. Thus one possibility is that the nondisabled pick up "nonverbal cues of discomfort" from the disabled which in turn causes them to feel uncomfortable and want to avoid such unpleasantness in the future.

Finally, Katz (1979) has summarized a number of other reasons why interactions with the disabled may occasion apprehensiveness :

> the contact may (a) cast doubt on the widely-held belief that the world is a just place where the innocent do not suffer (Lerner, 1970), (b) remind the normal person of his or her own vulnerability to sudden misfortune, (c) raise the prospect of becoming enmeshed in another person's dependency. In addition, if any of these factors should lead to avoidance of someone who is disabled, the actor may experience a lowering of self-esteem. (p. 455)

To this list one may add the possibility, based on psychoanalytic theory, that the perception of physical injury, especially if it involves the limbs, may stimulate castration fears (Maisel, 1953 cited by Wright, 1960).

Strategy of the Present Study

There is evidence from the series of studies by Kleck and associates that nondisabled subjects are uncertain about how to behave in the presence of a disabled person and in general feel conflicted in contact situations. They seem to want to distance themselves from the disabled person, yet at the same time act in such a way as to suggest protective concern for the needs and feelings of the disabled. Similarly, from the work of Langer and of Davis there is evidence that subjects would welcome the opportunity to make the disability a center of attention through either eye contact or verbal discourse, but are constrained by social norms against doing so. The ensuing conflict results in the distancing behaviors previously documented.

The above discussion leads one to formulate the hypothesis that if a disabled person were to himself acknowledge his condition and bring it out into the open as an acceptable object of attention this would result in a reduction of tension and discomfort in nondisabled persons. This increased comfort could then manifest itself as greater social acceptance, as for example, demonstrated by Hastorf et al. Furthermore, if the Hastorf findings are explainable in terms of reduced protective concern and the unleashing of curiosity, then open acknowledgement should also result in a disinhibition of the nondisabled interactant's impulse to discuss topics having to do with the disability. Subjects

may be expected to feel more comfortable about discussing disability-related issues.

However, not only is it important whether or not the stigmatized person acknowledges and brings his disability into the open, but the specific attitude he conveys about himself in relation to his disability is also very important. Thus, if the disability is acknowledged in a self-pitying manner, conflict may be increased, resulting in relatively more negative responses in the nondisabled. The strategy of the present research, then, is to expose nondisabled subjects to a confederate who appears to have a disability and then--while holding other information constant--to vary the extent and type of acknowledgement the confederate offers in regard to his disability.

Subjects were shown one of several videotapes of a person they were told they would soon be interviewing (no interview actually took place). Although the same person appeared in all the videotapes, in three of the four he was shown seated in a wheelchair. In addition, in each of the wheelchair tapes he presented a different attitude towards his disability. After seeing the videotape, subjects filled out various questionnaires, one of which was a mood scale. Subjects were also asked to rate how comfortable they felt about asking disability related questions of the disabled stimulus person. Presumably, if the open acknowledgement

condition disinhibited curiosity, subjects would then report feeling more comfortable about asking disability related questions. A more direct way of measuring the extent to which the disability was really a stimulus that aroused curiosity, would have been to let subjects choose questions from a list containing both disability related and unrelated questions, and then to see if subjects in the open condition more often chose disability related questions. However, this would have permitted subjects to arrange themselves in self-selected groups thereby completely confounding measurement of the other dependent variables. The final dependent measure gave subjects the opportunity to choose the context for the interview. One alternative involved face-to-face contact while another did not.

The Independent Variables

The two independent variables were whether or not the confederate appeared disabled and the attitude he explicitly displayed towards his disability. In all, four conditions were employed: 1) confederate appears nondisabled; 2) confederate appears disabled but does not acknowledge his disability in any way; 3) confederate appears disabled and acknowledges his disability without self-pity or distress, explicitly saying he is open to discussing his condition, 4) confederate appears disabled and acknowledges his disability in a way that conveys distress, bitterness and self-pity.

Hypotheses and Predictions

Hypotheses and predictions will be specified for each of the treatment conditions in turn.

Self-pity condition. Before specifying hypotheses and predictions for the self-pity condition it would be useful to review the manipulations in the Katz et al. study (1979) and look more closely at the processes they may have initiated in the subject. In the negative self-presentation condition, subjects might have thought that the disabled confederate's caustic and apathetic behavior was an expression of his pain and suffering. The post hoc interpretation was that this type of thinking led the subject to feel sorry for the disabled person and, therefore, treat him kindly. Katz et al. further conjectured that in the positive self-presentation condition, however, subjects might have felt that the handicapped confederate's outgoing, friendly, and achievement-oriented behavior was insincere--that the confederate was actually trying to deny his inferior status and suffering as a disabled individual. The subject might have been upset about the discrepancy between his expectation regarding the confederate and the latter's observed behavior for one of at least two reasons. The subject's sense of importance, achievement, and superiority could have been threatened (Dembo et al., 1956). Alternatively, the subject's self-concept as a discerning

bestower of sympathy might have been threatened (Katz & Glass,1979). He could have felt foolish or taken in for being prepared to be compassionate toward someone who obviously did not need or want compassion. In both cases the subject is thought to make inferences about how the disability is likely to influence one's adjustment to life. Apparently the subject is trying to maintain congruity between his prejudgment of the impact of a disability and information about the confederate's seeming adjustment to the disability. One can conclude from the results of this experiment that subjects had made the prejudgment that confinement to a wheelchair should be a source of disruption,suffering, and low achievement. Apparently, a friendly, achievement-oriented disposition violated this expectation, while caustic and apathetic behavior was seen as a logical extension of it.

From the above discussion one might be tempted to conclude that the self-pity, distress condition of the present study should produce relatively positive reactions in nonstigmatized subjects because it confirms the expectation of suffering. However,the precise opposite is predicted, due to the influence of other forces as outlined earlier. Goffman (1960) points out that the disabled must walk a fine line with respect to what is acceptable behavior; it is often very difficult if not impossible for them to avoid offending the nondisabled. So although the

disabled are expected to acknowledge their state of deprivation it is also expected, as Goffman writes, that "...the stigmatized...not feel bitter,resentful or self pitying".

It is hypothesized that the self-pity manipulation will cause subjects to feel more conflicted for one or both of the following reasons. First, my assumption is that the explicit neediness of the self-pitying confederate will heighten the pressure on the subjects to behave in accordance with the norm of receptiveness to another person's needs. For reasons presented earlier, a heightening of this norm is expected to also heighten inhibition, discomfort and conflict. Second, another possibility is that the subject will perceive the other person's self-pitying behavior to be an attempt to influence and manipulate his responses, in essence, to force him to be compassionate. There may be immediate resistance to this perceived attempt to manipulate. The resistance can take several forms: anxiety, anger, denigration or avoidance of the other person, or refusal to give him needed assistance. Whatever the form of the resistance it is certain to produce at the very least discomfort and anxiety since it conflicts with the general social norm that requires compassion for those less fortunate. It is therefore predicted that the self-pity condition will produce very negative reactions in nondisabled subjects when compared to the subjects in the open acknowledgement group.

More specifically, it is predicted that subjects in the self-pity group will report more anxiety (as a sign of conflict) and will more often choose a relatively low contact than high contact interview situation. My assumption is that in both this condition and the negative self-presentation condition in the Katz et al. study (1979) the subject is thought to perceive the physically handicapped confederate as someone who is suffering and in distress due to his disability. The assumed critical difference,however, is that in one condition the expression of distress is explicit while in the other it is implicit. This I believe to be a critical factor because of the perceived control issue discussed above. That is, in the caustic-apathetic condition of the Katz et al. study the subject experiences himself in control of his sympathy. He can feel proud of his spontaneous, freely given magnanimous act, while in the distress-self pity condition of this proposed study he is robbed of such an easy reward. If the reactance explanation is operative we may also expect subjects to report more hostility in the self-pity condition than in any of the other conditions.

Open discussion condition. With respect to the open discussion condition, if the implications of Kleck et al. and Langer et al. and the findings of Hastorf et al. are correct, this condition should produce the most positive

reactions in the nondisabled person because, first of all, the subject is relieved of the tension produced by not knowing whether he needs to screen out all references to the disability, (ostensibly to protect the disabled person). He should feel freer to focus attention on the disability either by eye contact and/or verbal discussion.

Secondly, his reaction should be positive because not only is he free to address the disability directly but also because none of his expectations about how the disabled should adjust to their disability have been violated. When the disabled person indicates that it is permissible to discuss his condition openly he is implying that he does indeed have a "condition" that makes him different and poses problems for him that he must deal with. However, he proceeds to deal with it in such a way that the nondisabled person does not feel he is being manipulated. The subject experiences having control over how he chooses to deal with the disability, unlike the situation in the distress,self-pity condition where there is an obvious "demand" for compassion.

This may also help to explain why Farina et al. failed to find any effects for their open acknowledgement manipulation. In that study, the acknowledgement manipulation consisted of a very brief statement made by the confederate that his disability caused him inconveniences

and was caused by an auto accident. There was no explicit indication that the disability was open to discussion. One could argue plausibly that the subjects perceived the confederate's statement that his leg caused him difficulty as some sort of self-pitying ploy. In the present study, it is predicted that subjects in the open acknowledgement condition will indicate greater comfort in asking questions having to do with disability, will report less anxiety, and will more often choose the high contact interview alternative than subjects in the other two disability conditions.

No attitude condition. The no attitude condition is expected to differ from the open acknowledgement condition on all the dependent variables such that reactions to the confederate in the former condition are the more negative. No clear predictions can be made regarding the no attitude condition and the self-pity group because it is unclear just how subjects will respond to the no attitude confederate. It is possible, as one pilot subject speculated, that a disabled person who expresses no attitude towards his disability and is therefore an unknown quantity in this regard, occasions more discomfort than a disabled person who expresses some attitude towards his disability regardless of whether it is positive or negative.

As specified earlier the no attitude condition is expected to differ from the open acknowledgement condition on all the dependent variables such that reactions to the confederate in this condition are the more negative.

Nondisabled condition. Predictions with respect to comparisons between the nondisabled and the disabled conditions are based on the findings reported rather consistently by previous researchers. Consistent with the "positivity effect" documented in other research, it is predicted that the confederate in all three disability conditions will be more favorably evaluated on an impression rating questionnaire than the nondisabled confederate.

Previous research has also shown that the nondisabled tend to want to avoid close interpersonal contact with the disabled and report greater levels of tension and discomfort than when interacting with other nondisabled persons. Therefore, it is predicted that the disabled confederate in the no acknowledgement condition will be subjected to greater interpersonal distance than the confederate in the nondisabled condition. Furthermore, subjects in the former condition are expected to report more anxiety than subjects in the latter condition.

No predictions are being made between the open acknowledgement condition and the nondisabled condition with

regard to the social distance measure and the mood measure because it is unclear to what extent the acknowledgement manipulation will reduce discomfort. It may reduce discomfort enough to cause the acknowledgement condition to differ from the other disability conditions but not enough to cause it to differ from the nondisabled condition.

Summary of hypotheses. Within disability groups predictions are as follows:

1. Subjects in the open acknowledgement condition, as compared with subjects in the other two disability conditions, will show (a) the least degree of anxiety and discomfort, (b) the highest degree of social acceptance, (c) the least amount of discomfort about discussing topics related to disability.

Between the nondisabled and disabled conditions, predictions are as follows:

2. Subjects in each of the three disability groups will rate the confederate more favorably then subjects in the nondisabled group.

3. Subjects in the no attitude condition will choose the low contact interview alternative more often than subjects in the nondisabled group.

4. Subjects in the no attitude condition will report more anxiety than subjects in the nondisabled condition.

Method

Subjects

Ninety-two subjects were recruited from the New York City area using newspaper ads calling for "volunteers to participate in interesting psychological research". Each subject was paid five dollars for a one hour session as specified in the ads. Seventy-four males and eighteen females were recruited and tested in this manner. The age of the subjects ranged from 19 to 66. The average age of the sample was 32, with a standard deviation of 12. Eighty-one percent of the sample indicated they had at least some college experience, while forty percent of the sample indicated they had graduated from college. Sixteen percent of the sample indicated that someone in their immediate family or group of close friends had a physical disability.

The Videotapes

The same male confederate appeared in all four videotapes. He was a twenty-four year old white male of slender build. In the tape for the No Disability condition, the confederate was seated in an ordinary chair. In the other three tapes he was seated in a wheelchair. The

confederate was given no specific instruction about how to control his nonverbal behavior and was told only to act naturally. Thus, the confederate largely maintained eye contact with the interviewer who was off camera except for portions of his lower body which were visible along with the chair he was seated in. The beginning portion of each of the wheelchair tapes was recorded only once. It was then copied and the particular disability attitude was edited in at the end. Thus, all the disability tapes were absolutely uniform except for the disability-attitude expressed by the confederate. In all the tapes the confederate said that he was a part time student and a part time computer programmer. He went on to say he expected to graduate from college soon and hoped to marry his girl friend. In addition, in the Open Acknowedgement condition, after being asked by the interviewer if he wanted to say anything about his disability, the confederate responded very openly by saying he knew people were often curious about his disability and that he didn't mind talking about it. In the Self-Pity condition he responded to the prompt from the interviewer in a very bitter, pained, self-pitying manner. He complained about how easy other people had it and how difficult life was for him. In the No Attitude condition the interviewer did not offer the prompt and the confederate makes no verbal statement about his disability. The No Attitude condition, therefore, is identical to the no disability condition

except that the confederate was sitting in a wheelchair (see Appendix B for transcript of videotape).

The Dependent Variables

A major contention of this study is that the anxiety and discomfort experienced by nondisabled persons in interaction situations with the physically handicapped can be influenced by the disabled person's attitude towards his disability. The mood scale was used in an attempt to measure the subject's internal feeling state before he saw the stimulus person on videotape and then again just before he expected to interview that person. For this purpose the Multiple Affect Adjective Check List (MAACL) was chosen (Zuckerman & Lubin,1965, see Appendix F). The scale requires subjects to quickly go down a list of 132 adjectives and check off the ones that describe how they feel at that moment. The responses, when tabulated, produce scores for anxiety, hostility and depression. The maximum score for the anxiety scale, which is the scale of major interest, is 22. Subjects are given a +1 for each of certain adjectives (s)he checks (e.g., nervous,tense,afraid), or certain adjectives not checked (e.g., calm,pleasant,steady). The MAACL was chosen not only because the three affect scores are particularly pertinent to the treatment manipulations and it is easily administered and scored,but also because the authors who validated the MAACL, mentioned its use as a

measure of affective change in the course of experimentation.

The list of 'topics for discussion' (see Appendix C and D) contained an assortment of topics categorized a priori by the experimenter with respect to whether or not they explicitly inquire about some aspect of disability, for example, "How do you manage to get around the city in your wheelchair?", and "What are the aspects of your personality you like the least and the most?". If the open acknowledgement manipulation succeeded in reducing protective concern and unleashing curiosity, it should have been reflected in an increase in subjects' comfort in discussing topics which have to do with disability

The social distance index is a behavioral measure. In the latter portion of the experiment, after the subject had the opportunity to view the disabled confederate, he was asked to make a decision regarding whether he wanted to interview the stimulus person face-to-face or via an intercom system connecting separate rooms.

The final dependent measure was an impression rating questionnaire (see Appendix F) consisting of fourteen unipolar adjectives anchoring one or the other end of a seven point scale, for example, intelligent, friendly, well-adjusted, happy. The purpose of this measure was two fold. First, it acted as a check on the effectiveness of the self-

pity manipulation. Secondly, when the No Disability and the Disability conditions were compared to each other, it acted as a dependent variable measuring the extent of the positivity effect.

Procedure

Subjects in groups of four or less were met by the experimenter who escorted them to the room where the experiment was to take place. Each subject took a seat in a three sided cubicle such that he could see directly in front. Thus, each subject was effectively isolated from the other subjects. Subjects were told the experiment was about the relationship between different types of communications media and impression formation, specifically, that the effects of different types of communication media were being studied. Furthermore, they were told that the experiment was divided into two parts. They were told that the first part would require them to rate their reactions to an individual shown to them on videotape, and that in the second part of the experiment they would have to interview this person, using a list of questions given to them.

After receiving this information, subjects were given the first administration of the MAACL under the pretext that it was needed to collect baseline information about the subject's mood states which could conceivably affect his impressions. They were then shown one of the four possible

videotapes which constituted the manipulation of the independent variables. After seeing the videotape subjects were given the list of questions which they believed they would have to ask of the person they had just seen on the videotape. In the conditions where the stimulus person seen on the videotape appeared to be disabled, half of the interview questions explicitly made reference to the disability (see Appendix C). In the condition where the stimulus person appeared to be physically normal, four other questions were substituted (see Appendix D) in either case a total of eight questions were presented to each subject. Subjects were asked to rate how comfortable they felt about asking each of the questions. This request was made under the pretext that the information was needed as baseline data since how they felt about asking each of the questions could affect how they asked the question and how they felt about the stimulus person's responses. Then they were given the final administration of the MAACL, and the Impression Rating Questionnaire. Once these questionnaires were completed the experimenter reminded the subjects that the study was about different types of communication media and that even in a real life interview situation there were different ways of communicating. Subjects were told they would be given a choice of doing the interview either face-to-face or via an intercom system connecting separate rooms. The experimenter also said that he was interested in the effects of both

types of interaction and that it didn't matter which one was chosen. Once subjects had indicated their choices on a sheet of paper which also asked for demographic information the experiment was over. Subjects were then completely debriefed and paid (see Appendix A for experimenter's srcipt).

Results

The principal manipulation of this study involved varying the self-presentation of the stimulus person. The analysis will therefore begin with an examination of the adequacy of this manipulation as measured by the Impression Rating Questionnaire. Table 1 presents the mean scores of the various experimental groups on each of the rating scales and on all scales combined. Also shown are the F values for one-way analysis of variance of the scores and the results of the Duncan Multiple Range Test for comparison of means when F was significant.

It can be seen in Table 1 that significant results were obtained on impression ratings of the trait 'self-pitying' ($F = 25.30$, $p < .001$). Further, subjects in the self-pity condition rated the confederate higher on this trait than did subjects in any other condition ($p < .05$ by Duncan Test). In addition, ratings of four other traits resulted in significant F values (all ps $< .01$): 'maladjusted', 'secure', 'happy', and 'self-accepting'. On each of these traits, the self-pitying confederate was rated less favorably than was the confederate in any other condition (ps $< .05$ by Duncan Test). These traits would all seem to be closely related psychologically to the trait of self-

pity, whereas those traits on which no differences were obtained would appear a priori to be relatively independent of self-pity. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the special comments of the confederate in the self-pity condition were in fact perceived by the subjects as reflecting a self-pitying attitude. That is, the self-pity manipulation seems to have been adequate. Unfortunately, through an oversight traits which could have been used as a check for the open acknowledgement manipulation were not included in the impression rating questionnaire.

An interesting characteristic of the data in Table 1 is that the average impression rating is very much on the positive side, ranging from a high of 2.4 for the open condition to a still rather positive low of 3.2 for the self-pity condition, on a seven point scale.

To see whether there was any age effect, subjects' impressions were re-evaluated by means of an analysis of covariance, covarying for age. The pattern of results did not change.

TABLE 1

Mean Impression Rating Scores by Experimental Group

	No disability (N=18)	No attitude (17)	Open (26)	Self-pity (31)	F
Intelligent	2.88	2.94	2.38	2.38	1.53
Self-pitying	2.33 (a)	2.05 (a)	2.00 (a)	4.51	25.3*
Friendly	2.88	3.41	2.50	2.70	2.03
Considerate	2.50	2.76	2.00	2.67	2.09
Competent	2.55	2.82	2.84	2.09	1.74
Creative	4.22	3.70	3.69	3.83	.47
Maladjusted	2.16 (a)	2.05 (a)	1.84 (a)	3.22	7.33*
Likeable	3.16	3.05	2.65	2.85	.71
Hardworking	2.05	2.17	1.75	1.87	.74
Nervous	3.22	3.17	2.65	3.67	2.36
Secure	2.72 (a)	2.94 (a)	2.50 (a)	4.00	6.64*
Happy	2.70 (a)	2.94 (a)	2.80 (a)	4.09	8.95*
Aggresive	3.38	3.53	3.15	3.1	.39
Self-accepting	2.16 (a)	2.23 (a)	1.90 (a)	4.06	15.10*
Total	2.73 (a)	2.77 (b)	2.43 (a)	3.23	4.81**

Note. Lower scores indicate a more favorable impression.
a Different from the self-pity group at the .05 level using the Duncan Multiple Range Test.
b Different from the self-pity group at the .07 level.
* $p < .01$
** $p < .001$

Hypotheses About Differences Among Disability Conditions

There were two continuous dependent variables: (1) subjects' estimate of anticipated comfort when asking the confederate various questions, and (2) subjects' responses to the mood adjective check list. The analysis of these dependent variables proceeded in two steps. First, overall F tests were reported, and the ranking of the group means were checked to see if they were in accordance with predictions. Then, a priori contrasts were done to test the comparisons specifically stated in each of the hypotheses. Secondary post hoc analyses among the remaining groups were also done using the Duncan Multiple Range Test. For the dichotomous variable,social distance, analyses were done using methods appropriate to contingency tables, either chi-square where valid or the Fisher Exact Test.

Hypothesis 1a. Hypothesis 1a states that subjects exposed to an openly acknowledging disabled stimulus person will report less anxiety than either of the other two disability groups.

To test this hypothesis each subject was given the MAACL twice, once before seeing the stimulus person on videotape and then again after having seen the videotape and the list of questions he thought he would be asking the stimulus person.

Table 2 contains the mean pretest scores, the mean posttest scores and the mean change scores (posttest minus pretest) for each of the three MAACL mood scales for each group. Also shown are overall F tests for each mood scale.

An analysis of variance of the anxiety pretest scores showed that the groups did not significantly differ from each other ($F = 1.10$, $p < .35$). An overall analysis of variance of the change scores for the anxiety scale also failed to reach statistical significance ($F = 1.16$; $p = .32$). An a priori contrast between the self-pity and open conditions shows a slight trend ($F = 2.08$, $p = .15$) for the self-pity condition (1.29) to occasion a larger increase in anxiety than the open condition (.20) . This portion of hypotheses 1a,therefore, receives only very slight support.

If the no attitude condition is assumed to be a neutral no maripulation condition, then the demonstration of a unique effect due to the open acknowledgement manipulation requires that the open condition be shown to be different from the no attitude condition. Unfortunately, based on a priori contrasts there is virtually no difference between the open condition (mean = .20) and the no attitude condition (mean = .41) with respect to the mean anxiety change score ($F = .06$, $p = .80$). This portion of hypothesis 1a,therefore, receives no support.

TABLE 2

Mean Multiple Affect Adjective Check List Scores

	No disability	No attitude	Open	Self-pity	F	p
I Pretest						
Anxiety	8.50	7.29	6.03	7.03	1.10	.35
Depression	15.90	14.41	13.53	14.58	.66	.58
Hostility	11.00(a)	8.29	6.84	8.03	3.01	.03*
II Posttest						
Anxiety	8.30	7.70	6.23	8.32		
Depression	15.66	15.29	13.23	16.09		
Hostility	9.50	7.47	6.80	8.19		
III Change Scores						
Anxiety	-.20	.41	.20	1.29	1.16	.33
Depression	-.24	.88	-.30	1.51	1.47	.22
Hostility	-1.41	-.82	-.04	.16	.78	.51

Note. F test for the hostility change score represents an analysis of of covariance, with the hostility pretest score as the covariate.
a Different from both the open and self-pity conditions at the .05 level using the Duncan Multiple Range Test.

Secondary analyses do not show any significant differences among the groups on the mean pretest scores or the mean change scores for depression . However, the overall F test for the hostility score was significant ($F = 3.01$, $p < .03$). The Duncan test showed that the no disability group was different from both the open and self-pity group at the .05 level. An analysis of covariance on the posttest hostility score covarying for pretest hostility level, however, did not reach statistical significance ($F = .78$, $p < .51$). As a final analysis, to see if any group had changed significantly from pretest to posttest, the probability that each mean change score came from a population whose mean is 0 (indicating no change), was tested using the Student's t statistic. Only the self-pity group showed any significant changes -- significant increases in both anxiety and depression ($t = 2.38$, $p = .02$; $t = 2.56$, $p = .01$, respectively).

Hypothesis 1b. Hypothesis 1b states that subjects exposed to an openly acknowledging disabled stimulus person will more often choose the high contact interview situation than subjects in either of the other two disability groups[1]. To test this hypothesis subjects were asked to state whether

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[1] Because of significant changes in how this variable was presented all eighteen pilot subjects were deleted from the analysis of this variable thus leaving a total of 74 subjects. No other significant changes of procedure took place as a result of the pilot testing.

they preferred to interview the stimulus person face-to-face or from a separate room via an intercom system (no interviews were actually conducted). It was assumed that the greater discomfort of subjects in the self-pity condition would heighten their desire to avoid intimate contact with the stimulus person, while the greater comfort of subjects in the open acknowledgement condition would result in less avoidance behavior.

Table 3 presents subjects' interview choices for the various conditions. Unfortunately, the cell Ns were too small to permit a valid overall chi-square test.

Since the hypothesis predicts the open condition to be different from both the self-pity condition and the no attitude condition, the Fisher Exact Test for these two 2 (conditions) x 2 (choices) tables was computed. A chi-square test would not have been valid because of the small cell Ns. While differences in the frequency of subjects' interview choices do seem to be in the right direction in that subjects in the self-pity conditon more often chose the low contact alternative, than subjects in the open condition, the difference was not statistically significant ($p = .13$). Comparing the open condition to the no attitude condition, differences in selection again seem to be in the right direction with subjects in the open condition more often choosing the high contact alternative but differences

TABLE 3

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Interview Choices by Group

	Nondisabled (N=18)	No attitude (17)	Open (19)	Self-pity (20)
High Contact	16 (89%)	13 (77%)	17 (90%)	14 (70%)
Low Contact	2 (11%)	4 (23%)	2 (10%)	6 (30%)

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent group percentages.

again fail to achieve statistical significance ($p = .27$). Secondary post hoc analyses were also performed to determine if the data were suggestive of any trends. These analyses are presented below.

There does seem to have been a general dislike for the low contact alternative, a matter which will be discussed in the next chapter. Inspection of Table 3 suggests a similarity between the normal condition and the open condition on one hand and the no attitude condition and the self-pity condition on the other hand. If the open acknowledgement manipulation was a successful disinhibitor and tension reducer then one might expect subjects in this condition to be similiar in their responses to subjects in the no disability condition. There does not seem to be any a priori justificaion for collapsing the no attitude and self-pity conditions. Nonetheless, a chi-square test of choice frequencies for groups collapsed according to this scheme resulted in a marginally significant tendency for the self-pity and no attitude conditions to elicit less intimate contact than the open and normal conditions ($X = 3.17$, $p = .07$, see Table 4).

The findings for hypothesis 1b can be summarized as follows. Because of what seems to have been a general avoidance of the low contact alternative, cell frequencies were too small to permit a valid chi-square test for the

TABLE 4

Subjects' Interview Choices Collapsed into 2 by 2 Table

	Nondisabled and Open Conditions	No attitude and Self-pity Conditions
High Contact	33 (90%)	27 (73%)
Low Contact	4 (10%)	10 (27%)

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent group percentages.
chi-square = 3.17; p = .07

full table. There is, however, a weak tendency ($p = .13$) as expected from this hypothesis, for the self-pity condition to occasion more avoidance of the stimulus person than the open condition. There is no tendency for subjects in the open condition to differ from subjects in the no attitude condition.

Hypothesis 1c. Hypothesis 1c states that subjects exposed to an openly acknowledging disabled stimulus person will report feeling more comfortable about asking disability related questions than subjects in either of the other two disability groups.

After viewing the videotape Ss were given a list of questions which they were told they would have to ask the person they had just seen on the videotape. They were asked to rate, on a seven point scale, how comfortable they felt about asking each of the questions. Based on a priori judgments made by the experimenter four of the questions were designated as disability related and four as disability unrelated. In the normal condition none of the eight questions were disability related (see Appendix C).

Table 5 presents the mean ratings for each interview question and the mean subtotal for each type of question, for each of the three disability groups. Looking at the subtotal for disability related questions, Table 5 shows a significant difference among the disability groups ($F =$

3.96, $p < .02$). Furthermore, the means are ordered as expected with the open condition showing more comfort than the other two disability groups. A priori contrasts (see Table 6) show that as predicted subjects in the self-pity condition (mean=3.8) felt more uncomfortable about asking the disability related questions than subjects in the open condition (mean=4.95) ($F = 8.53$, $p = .004$). Significant differences (at the .05 level or better) were also found for three of the four disability related questions when examined individually. Of the four, Question 6 (How do you get around the city with the wheelchair?) was the least discriminating ($F = 3.32$, $p = .07$). This aspect of hypothesis 1b is,therefore, well supported. Although an inspection of group means for the disability related questions subtotal in Table 6 indicates a similar pattern between the open (mean=4.95) and the no attitude (mean=4.36) conditions, the a priori contrast fails to reach statistical significance ($F = 2.12$, $p = .14$). Looking at the individual disability related question means, it can be seen that the greatest difference between the open and no attitude conditions occurs with respect to Question 1 (How does your disability affect you social life? Does it interfere in making friends?) ($F = 2.11$, $p = .08$).

Once again, the critical test for a unique acknowedgement effect would require a significant difference from the no attitude group. However, since this difference

shows only a very marginal effect, this aspect of hypothesis 1c can be said to have received only slight support.

In addition to this primary analysis, secondary analyses were also done. They will be presented below.

Looking at the subtotals in Table 5 it can be seen that subjects in each group anticipated greater discomfort when asking disability related questions than when asking the unrelated ones. A repeated measures analysis of variance confirms a main effect for type of question ($F = 29.56$, $df = 1,71$, $p = < .001$). In addition, not only is the self-pity condition (mean=4.65) different from the open condition (mean=5.52) with regard to disability related questions but also with regard to disability unrelated questions ($F = 4.6$, $p = .01$). Indeed, looking at the individual questions it seems that the disability unrelated questions were better discriminators than the disability related questions, suggesting the possibility of a displacement effect.

TABLE 5

Mean Comfort Ratings for Interview Questions by Group

	No attitude	Open	Self-pity	F	p
I Disability Related Questions					
Q1 Social life	3.88	4.88	3.83	2.65	.07
Q3 Sex	3.05	3.65	2.48	2.43	.09
Q5 Drive a car	5.41	5.61	4.55	2.53	.08
Q6 Get around city	5.00	5.65	4.70	1.66	.19
Subtotal	4.36 (b)	4.95 (a)	3.80	3.96	.02*
II Disability Unrelated Questions					
Q2 Personality	5.35	5.88	5.00	1.48	.23
Q4 Iran crisis	6.35	5.48	5.29	2.90	.06
Q7 Feel ashamed of	3.88	3.88	2.88	2.35	.10
Q8 Favorite TV show	6.00	6.57	5.50	4.71	.01**
Subtotal	5.37 (a)	5.52 (a)	4.65	4.61	.01**
Grand Total	4.87 (c)	5.25 (a)	4.27	5.27	.007**

Note. Lower scores indicate more discomfort.
a Different from the self-pity group at the .05 level by Duncan Test
b Different from the open group at the .16 level by Duncan Test
c Different from the self-pity group at the .09 level by Duncan Test

TABLE 6

A priori Contrasts for Comfort Ratings of Interview Questions

Contrast 1 Open condition vs Self-pity Condition

Means

Interview Questions	Open	Self-pity	F	p
Q1 Social life	4.88	3.83	4.65	.03*
Q3 Sex	3.65	2.48	4.88	.02**
Q5 Drive a car	5.61	4.55	4.08	.03*
Q6 Get around city	5.65	4.70	3.32	.07
Total	4.95	3.80	8.53	.004***

Contrast 2 Open condition vs No attitude condition

Means

Interview Questions	Open	No attitude	F	p
Q1 Social life	4.88	3.88	2.12	.14
Q3 Sex	3.65	3.05	.92	.34
Q5 Drive a car	5.61	5.41	.13	.71
Q6 Get around city	5.65	5.00	1.16	.28
Total	4.95	4.36	2.12	.14

Hypotheses About Differences Between the Disability and No Disability Groups

Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 2 states that the confederate will be more positively appraised, on the Impression Rating Questionnaire, by subjects in each of the three disability conditions than subjects in the no disability condition.

Table 1 shows that there is no evidence to support this hypothesis. The ratings for each item separately and for all the items combined do not significantly differ from each other when the open condition and the no attitude condition are compared to the no disability condition. There is a difference,however, between the self-pity group and the no disability group on those traits which are psychologically related to self-pity and also on the total score. However, this finding cannot be interpreted as supportive of this hypothesis. It is evidence of the effectiveness of the self-pity manipulation but not of the positivity effect which requires the demonstration of general over-evaluation of disabled persons.

Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 states that subjects in the no attitude condition will choose the low contact interview alternative more often than subjects in the nondisabled condition.

The Fisher Exact Test probability value for this 2 x 2 table is .30. Thus, while the frequency distribution conforms to expectations they are not strong enough to reach statisical significance. Thus, this hypothesis does not receive statistical support.

Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 4 states that subjects in the no attitude condition will report more anxiety than subjects in the nondisabled condition.

The a priori F test for this comparison indicates that the mean anxiety change scores, although differing in the expected direction, are not statistically different from each other (means are: -.20 for the no disability condition and .41 for the no attitude condition; $F = .29$, $p = .59$). Thus, this hypothesis receives no support.

However, there were some unpredicted differences between the disability and no disability groups with respect to interview question comfort ratings. Table 7 shows the mean comfort ratings for the four questions which were rated by both disabled and nondisabled stimulus person groups. Question four (Iran crisis) shows a difference between the nondisabled condition and both the no attitude and the open condition. Question 8 (favorite TV shows) shows a difference between the no disability and the open condition. Interestingly, subjects in the no disability condition felt more discomfort than subjects in the disabled

conditions. Although the overall F test for the total score is significant ($F = 3.5$, $p < .01$) none of the pairwise contrasts were significant at the .05 level using the Duncan Multiple Range Test.

Finally, no differences were found when subjects in the self-pity group were divided into two groups and compared to each other. One group consisted of the first seven subjects to be tested in the self-pity condition (the pilot subjects), and the other group consisted of all other subjects exposed to the self-pity manipulation after the pilot testing and after an additional two lines were added to the self-pity statement (see Appendix B). Although there was a slight tendency, as would be expected, for subjects in the latter group (the post pilot group) to perceive the stimulus person as more self-pitying (3.8 for the pilot subjects and 4.9 for the other subjects),the difference was not statistically significant ($t = 1.72$, $p = .10$). Nor were there any significant differences on the impression rating score as a whole or the interview question comfort rating scale as a whole ($t = 1.15$, $p = .25$,; $t = .65$, $p = .52$, respectively). Therefore, all the subjects in this condition were grouped together for all analyses.

TABLE 7

Mean Comfort Ratings for Disability Unrelated Interview Questions for all Groups

	No disability	No attitude	Open	Self-pity	F	p
Q2 Personality	5.16	5.35	5.88	5.00	1.10	.35
Q4 Iran crisis	4.83	6.35(a)	5.84(a)	5.29	3.24	.02*
Q7 Most ashamed of	3.50	3.88	3.88	2.88	1.58	.19
Q8 Favorite TV show	5.77	6.00	6.57(a)	5.58	2.94	.03*
Total	4.81	5.39	5.54	4.54	3.50	.01

Note. Lower scoes indicate more discomfort.
a Different from the no disability group at the .05 level using the Duncan Multiple Range Test.

Summary of Results

With regard to Hypotheses 1, 3, and 4, the rankings of the obtained means are in the expected pattern although the differences between the means are in general not statistically significant. For example, on the average subjects in the open acknowledgement condition do seem to report less anxiety than subjects in the self-pity condition and the no attitude condition, as expected, but the differences failed to reach statistical significance. Similarly, while more subjects in the self-pity condition and the no attitude condition chose the low contact interview alternative than subjects in the open acknowledgement condition, the differences again failed to reach significance.

The only statistically significant differences occurred with respect to the anticipated comfort ratings and the impression ratings. Subjects in the self-pity condition believed they would feel more uncomfortable than subjects in the other two disability groups about asking both disability related and unrelated questions. It was also found subjects formed a less favorable impression of the confederate in the self-pity condition than in any of the other conditions. This difference seems to be attributable to ratings of traits which seem to be psychologically related to an attitude of self-pity (e.g., secure, happy, self-accepting).

Discussion

If subjects indeed felt interested in addressing the confederate's disability either through eye contact or direct verbal reference,but were in conflict because of the norm prohibiting such actions, then a disabled confederate who openly acknowledged his disability by communicating to the subject that it was alright to address the disability was expected to reduce the subject's conflict. It was expected that subjects in the open acknowledgement condition would,therefore, (1) feel less anxiety, (2) expect to feel less discomfort about asking disability-related questions, and (3) choose the interview situation of greater intimacy than subjects in either of the two other disability conditions. Results pertaining to each of these expectations will be reviewed in turn.

The results of this study do not support the above stated hypotheses about the effects of the open acknowledgement manipulation. There is only a very slight tendency for subjects in the open acknowledgement condition to report less anxiety than subjects in the self-pity condition ($p = .15$), and no tendency to differ from the no attitude group. One explanation for this lack of significant differences lies in the possibility that the mere anticipation of

interpersonal contact was not sufficiently compelling to elicit mood changes of a magnitude differentially measurable by the self-report check list. Furthermore, the situation of having to ask predetermined questions in a nonreciprocal experimental situation may have also contributed to feelings of noninvolvement and detachment in the subjects. This explanation is supported by the finding that only the self-pity group reported any significant increase in anxiety level from pretest to posttest. In light of the relatively personal and intimate nature of some of the interview questions it would not be unreasonable to expect a general increase in anxiety for all the groups. That this did not occur suggests that many of the subjects did not experience the experimental situation as very compelling. Both of the elements missing from this study (actual contact with the stimulus person and interactional spontaneity) were present in the studies of Kleck and associates in which it was reported that subjects displayed more anxiety and discomfort in the presence of a disabled confederate than they displayed with a nondisabled confederate. Of course, the critical difference could lie in the lack of interactional spontaneity rather than in the absence of actual contact with a stimulus person. Perhaps a situation in which subjects believed they would be spontaneously interacting with a disabled person would have produced stronger reactions regardless of the fact that the contact was merely anticipated by the subjects and did not actually occur.

The proposition that subjects felt inhibited curiosity about the disability or wanted to verbally address it would have been consistent with a finding that subjects felt more comfortable about asking disability related questions of a disabled confederate who invited discussion about the disability than of a confederate who did not. Note, however, that even if such a finding had occurred it would not prove that subjects felt inhibited curiosity or interest about the disability; an alternative explanation is available. Since, in this experiment, subjects were led to believe they would have to ask all the interview questions on their lists, there was no way to measure the extent of their desire to talk about the disability. It may be that subjects did indeed feel uncomfortable about asking the disability-related questions, because they were being forced to do so, having no desire to do so on their own. Thus, of course, if a disabled person invited discussion about the disability, subjects' discomfort would be reduced. As suggested earlier, a much better measure of inhibited curiosity or interest would have been secured if subjects had been allowed to choose questions from a list containing both disability related and unrelated questions, or at least if subjects had been asked to rate how much they would have liked to ask each question on the list. This would have been the logical next step once the effects of the acknowledgement manipulation had been demonstrated. Note

that the intended purpose of this study was not to prove any particular model but instead to demonstrate the importance of disability-attitudes in a context which would encourage and direct future research. The conflict model developed in the literature and in this paper was thought to be able to provide such guidance.

Looking at Table 5 (in the Results chapter) we see that the anticipated comfort ratings of subjects in the open acknowledgement condition were higher than those of subjects in the no attitude condition on six of the eight questions. However, none of the differences reach statistical significance. The greatest difference between the two groups is found when the ratings for the four disability-related questions were grouped together. Although the F statistic failed to achieve significance ($p = .14$), the difference between the means of the open acknowledgement condition and the no attitude condition, while not impressive, is encouraging when one considers the self-presentation of the stimulus person in the no attitude condition. As shown in Table 1 (in the Results chapter) the confederate was rated on the positive end of the scale in all the conditions. It may be that the self-presentation of the stimulus person in the no attitude condition made such a positive impression that an open attitude towards his disability may have been assumed by some of the subjects. This of course would weaken the open acknowledgement

manipulation. Note also that the subjects were told that the stimulus person had "volunteered" to be in the experiment and that he must have ,therefore, implicitly agreed to let himself be interviewed by strangers. Subjects may have interpreted this to mean that the confederate was in general an open person and probably also open to discussing his disability. It would have been valuable to have included a measure of subjects' perceptions of the confederate's attitude towards his disability. Among other things, subjects could have been asked to rate the confederate on how open to discussing his disability he seemed to be. It would have then been possible to determine whether and to what extent the confederate in the open acknowledgement condition was seen to be more open about his disability than in the other disability conditions.

To measure the effects of open acknowledgement of disability on social distance, subjects were asked to indicate whether they would prefer to conduct the inteview of the confederate face-to-face or through an intercom system. Results show that the low contact alternative was chosen very rarely regardless of which experimental group the subject was in. A chi-square test comparing the frequency distributions among the three disability conditions could not be validly done. There was a slight tendency (Fisher Exact Test $p = .13$) for subjects in the open condition to select the high contact alternative more

often than subjects in the self-pity condition, as hypothesized. And a weaker tendency for them to more often choose the high contact alternative than subjects in the no attituce condition (Fisher Exact Test p = .27). On the whole, the analysis of results for this variable does not support the hypothesis that open acknowledgement of disability would coincide with less social distance. The most significant finding with respect to the social distance measure is that very few subjects chose the low intimacy alternative, and that any effects due to the disability-attitude manipulation were probably washed out by this phenomenon. Information obtained informally during the debrieting sessions sheds some light on why the low contact alternative was not more often selected. A number of subjects (exact numbers were not recorded) stated or implied two reasons. First of all, subjects may have felt a strong need to control the interaction. They may have felt they could better monitor the reactions of the stimulus person, whose well being they were very concerned about, in a face-to-face situation than in a situation where visual feedback was denied them. Monitoring the confederate's reactions would have given the subjects needed information to determine the impact of their behaviors on the confederate and thus help them exercise greater control over the interaction and be more protective of the stimulus person. It must be remembered that subjects in the no disability

condition also believed they would be asking some rather personal questions (e.g. about sex) and therefore might also have wanted to monitor the confederate's reactions.

Secondly, a number of subjects (exact numbers were not recorded) explicitly stated that although they wanted to avoid the more intimate contact with the disabled confederate they felt they could not be so openly rejecting of a disabled person. One subject in the self-pity condition spontaneously said he felt a 'moral obligation' to overcome an impulse to avoid the disabled stimulus person.

It had been hoped that a situation of attributional ambiguity (see Snycer et al, 1979) could be created which would have allowed the subjects to outwardly justify selecting the low intimacy alternative as related to other factors in the experiment and not to their feelings about the disabled. Apparently this attempt was not very successful.

In summary, only very slight support can be reported for the hypothesis that the open acknowledgement manipulation occasions positive reactions. It would seem that the lack of confirmatory results could have been due to methodological inadequacies in the experiment. However, one cannot dismiss the possibility that the expected effects of the open acknowledgement manipulation did not materialize simply because the conjectured underlying mechanisms were

not operative i.e., open acknowledgement does not reduce conflict and/or the sort of conflict model developed in this paper with an emphasis on inhibited curiosity, is not related to negative reactions to the disabled. It should also be pointed out that the results do not support alternative explanations about the reasons for aversive reactions to the disabled. For example, the negative attribute as sufficient cause model discussed earlier makes the assumption of a basic perceptual-cognitive link between the recognition of an aversive characteristic and rejection of the person possessing that characteristic. Based on this model, one might have expected the open acknowledgement manipulation to occasion more anxiety and avoidance than the no acknowledgement condition because it brings greater focus and attention on the negative attribute (i.e., the disability). Clearly, this did not happen. Another possibility is that multiple simultaneously operative forces may have cancelled each other out. While the open acknowledgement manipulation may have helped subjects feel more comfortable because of its disinhibitory effects it may have simultaneously increased discomfort because it narrowed attention on an aversive attribute.

While the hypothesis that the open acknowledgement condition would emerge as unique from the other two disability conditions does not receive strong support, the evidence is more supportive of the uniqueness of the self-

pity condition, at least with respect to the anticipated comfort ratings.

While there was little evidence to support the contention that the expression of a self-pitying attitude on the part of a handicapped person occasions increased anxiety in nondisabled observers, there was good evidence that subjects believed they would feel more uncomfortable about asking both disability-related and unrelated questions in the self-pity condition than in the other two disability groups. The effect seems to be stronger,for reasons that are unclear, when the questions are disability-unrelated. It is possible that subjects assumed that the confederate in the self-pity condition would be reluctant to discuss topics related to disability. This would explain differences between the self-pity group and the other two disability groups with respect to their anticipation of discomfort when asking disability related question. This would not,however,explain the greater amount of discomfort that subjects in the self pity condition expected to feel when asking questions seemingly unrelated to the disability. The self-pity group was also the only group which demonstrated a significant increase in anxiety from pretest to posttest as measured by the MAACL. It was also the only group in which the average hostility score was greater than zero rather than less than zero (although it neither differed significantly from zero nor differed significantly from the means for the other

groups). If, as some writers speculate (Ibsen and Noonberg, 1979) the expression of self-pity leads others to experience a curtailment of freedom, as delineated in the reactance model, we would have expected subjects in the self-pity condition to report more hostility than subjects in the other groups. Perhaps as suggested earlier, the experimental situation was simply not compelling enough to elicit emotional reactions.

Comparisons between the disability and the no disability conditions were intended to duplicate findings already reported in the literature. It was predicted that subjects in the disability conditions would report a more favorable impression of the confederate than subjects in the no disability condition and thus duplicate the positivity effect obtained in several previous studies. The obtained results clearly do not support this hypothesis. The only difference among the four groups is between the self-pity group and the other three groups. The former was evaluated less favorably. As suggested earlier this difference is probably due to the specific effects of the self-pity manipulation. The confederate in the self-pity condition seems to have been rated less positively than in the other conditions, but only on items which are more or less directly related to the self-pity manipulation.

At least two explanations of the positivity effect come to mind. First, that there is a discrepancy in the eye of the perceiver between the evaluation of an action and the evaluation of the source of that action. This is a violation of one of Heider's (1944) principles of cognitive balance which states that like objects are expected to produce like actions,and conversely that dissimilar objects are expected to produce dissimilar actions. Balance can then be restored by re-evaluating either the action or the source of the action. For example, if two persons perform at the same objective level but much less was expected from one of the persons, then very likely the achievements of that person would be over-evaluated. This argument has been extended to include the disabled (Wright,1960). That is, since the disabled are in such an obviously inferior and disadvantaged position much less is expected of them and therefore any achievement is over-evaluated if compared to a nondisabled person. Why this mechanism did not occur in this study is not clear.

The other explanation for the positivity effect lies in ambivalence-amplification theory (Katz & Glass, 1979). According to this theory favorable evaluations of a disabled stimulus person can be expected to occur when the disabled person presents himself in a very positive manner, the nondisabled evaluator seeking in this way to reduce the psychic tension associated with an ambivalent attitude

toward disabled people in general. While there was no attempt to influence subjects' self-perception in this study, there was an attempt to have the disabled person present himself as relatively well adjusted to the general demands of life. Thus, it is surprising that the disabled confederate was not rated more favorably than the nondisabled confederate since both possible explanations of the positivity effect could apply to this situation. The only suggestion of an explanation comes from a study cited earlier (Katz et al, 1979) in which it was found that disabled confederates who appeared "too normal", that is, were friendly and achievement oriented, received less assistance and generated more hostility than either apathetic and caustic disabled confederates or nondisabled confederates. It is possible, although no corroborating evidence can be presented, that the confederate in the no attitude condition was also perceived as trying to be "too normal" .

It was also predicted that subjects in the no attitude condition would report more anxiety than subjects in the no disability condition. Although the group means were in the expected direction they failed to differ significantly. Again, this may be explained by the possibility that the experiment was not sufficiently engaging for subjects to have significant emotional responses. This possibility does not conflict with findings that subjects in the self-pity

condition anticipated more discomfort in the interview than subjects in the open acknowledgement condition. With respect to the mood scale, subjects were asked to respond according to how they actually felt at the moment. Whereas with respect to the interview question comfort ratings subjects were asked to indicate how they felt about an activity which was yet to occur.

In summary, the general pattern of results, within disability groups and with respect to all the dependent variables, is in the expected direction. That is, subjects in the open acknowledgement condition report less anxiety and less discomfort with respect to asking disability related questions, and more often choose the high contact alternative than subjects in the two other disability groups. However, in general these differences were too small to reach statistical significance. It has been suggested that several aspects of the experimental situation may have caused the expected differences to be masked or attenuated.

The notion that the expression of self-pity on the part of disabled persons occasions negative reactions in the non-disabled, whereas open acknowedgment of one's disability occasions more positive reactions, is certainly worthy of further research. Once these effects have been demonstrated, it would be of interest to identify the mediating factors

responsible for their occurrence. In this area, special consideration should be given to the idea that the juxtaposition, within nondisabled persons, of a desire to be kind to the disabled and the obtrusiveness of the disability is responsible for much of the documented strains in interactions between the disabled and nondisabled.

Appendix A

Experimenter's Script

(Subjects, in groups of four or less, are met by the experimenter and are escorted to the room where the experiment is to take place. The experimenter begins as follows:)

We're studying the process of impression formation and the mass media. We want to investigate the effect of the medium on the impression that people form about whatever is being communicated to them. For example, does reading about someone in a newspaper create the same impression as seeing him on TV or in real life?

In our day and age more and more of the information we get about events and people is through TV, that is, video tape. Political candidates are good examples. For most people, the impressions they have of the candidate ,as a person, are based on what is seen of him on TV. Only rarely do you get to meet one of them in person. We wonder how different the impressions would be if you did.

In today's study, the final phase of a much larger study, we're going to compare the impressions formed when a person is viewed on TV to the impressions that are formed when he is seen in real life. So, we've set up a situation

where you can watch two people interacting on videotape. You will then be asked to make certain judgments about one of the persons, and then you will meet him in person and again indicate your impressions.

What we did is take a film from another study done a couple of months ago. That was a study in which we asked two volunteer subjects to get to know each other. One subject was randomly selected to ask questions of the other subject. The subject selected to ask the questions was given a list to use as a guide but he was also free to ask his own questions. And now, it occurred to us that we could use that same videotape for this study. We contacted the subject who was taped and he agreed to come back and help with this study.

OK, now your job will be divided into two parts. First, you're going to watch a segment of that taped interaction and rate your reactions and impressions of the person who was being asked the questions. Then you're going to meet the person who was talking about himself and each one of you will ask some further questions so that your impressions will then be based on a real life experience of the person. To help things along you will be supplied a list of questions and of course each of you will have a different list. Then again ,as before, you will fill out various questionnaires. Combined with other data this

comparison will be able to tell us the unique effect of each communication medium on the information being conveyed.

(At this point the experimenter asks if there are any questions. If there are any he answers them. He then distributes the MAACL and says:)

This is a mood adjective check list. Please read the instructions on the first page and proceed as indicated. We need this information because we know from previous research that the impressions people form can sometimes be influenced by their mood at the moment. So, we need this data as baseline information.

(After all the subjects have completed the scale the experimenter collects them and proceeds to show the videotape. At the conclusion of the tape the experimenter distributes three more questionnaires. The first contains the topics of discussion for the 'second part' of the experiment. The experimenter continues as follows:)

I've just given each of you a different list of questions. Each one of you is going to try to ask every question on your list or, depending on the length of the answers, as many as you can fit in during your allotted time period. We also need to know in advance how you feel about each of the questions because it may affect, among other things, how you ask the question and how you respond to the answers. So, again, to get some baseline data, please complete the rating scale beneath each question by circling an X.

(The experimenter then distrubutes the second questionnaire which is again the MAACL and subjects are once again told the information is needed for baseline data. The third questionnaire is the Impression Rating Scale. When the subjects have completed these three questionnaires the experimenter continues :)

Ok, we're almost finished with part one of the experiment. As soon as we're done you can take a 5 minute break while we set up for the second part. During this time you can wait in the lounge or go upstairs to the cafeteria for coffee, then we will reconvene for the second part of the study. Now as you know this is a study about different types of communication media. You've seen this individual on tape, and in the second part of the study you will interview him in real life, but of course, there are different ways of interacting with a person even in real life, for example, face-to-face or through a telephone system. So, what we're going to do is give each of you a choice of doing the interview either face-to-face or over a telephone-like intercom system. We are interested in both types of communicaion media so it does not matter which one you pick. So would you please indicate on this last questionnaire the room number you will return to after the break, room 701 for the face-to-face interview or room 702 for the telephone interview.

(Subjects are given this last questionnaire which asks for demographic information as well as for their room selection. Once this questionnaire is completed the experiment is finished. Subjects are then fully debriefed.)

Appendix B

Transcript of Videotape

Interviewer: OK, I'm supposed to ask you questions about yourself . Alright, why don't you just tell me a little bit about yourself, you know, just some general background stuff.

Respondent: Alright, let me see. (PAUSE) I was born and raised right here in NYC in the Bronx, and I still live there with my parents. (PAUSE) I'm a senior at City College and I'm majoring in computer science. And I also have a part time job as a computer programmer. (SHORT PAUSE) I guess that's about it.

Interviewer: OK, tell me a little bit about your childhood.

Respondent: (PAUSE) Well, I guess it was a pretty ordinary childhood. I got along well with my parents and brothers and sisters (PAUSE) There were plenty of kids in the neighborhood to play with, that was real nice, and, I remember it as a very happy time of my life.

Interviewer: Alright, how do you like school?

Respondent: It's OK, although going to class can sometimes be a real pain in the neck. I like the subject I'm studying though, computer science, I think

it will offer me a lot of job security, and I'm a senior now so I should be graduating this semester.

Interviewer: And what are your future vocational plans?

Respondent: Well, when I graduate I hope to be a computer programmer on a full time basis. As I mentioned before I'm currently working as a programmer part time, and my boss said he would be willing to hire me full time as soon as I get my degree.

Interviewer: Alright, now just to change the pace a little, are you engaged to anyone or involved with anyone?

Respondent: No, I'm not engaged , yet, but I've been seeing the same woman for about two years now. And (SHORT PAUSE), well, if everything continues to go well, and if I graduate on schedule and the fulltime job position materializes, and if we can find a suitable apartment in NY, which can be a very difficult thing, we probably will get engaged and married.

Interviewer: Well, it sounds promising. I hope it all goes well for you.

Respondent: Thank you. I think it will.

Interviewer: Alright, next question. What do you do in your spare time?

Respondent: Well, right now I don't have very much spare time. My mid-term exams are coming up so I spend most of my evenings studying. And I go to class two days a week and I work the other three, so I don't have much spare time. (PAUSE) What time I do have I like to spend with my friends or on my hobby, coin collecting. I have a pretty good collection of old North and South American coins.

Interviewer: OK, last question. Is there anything you would like to say about your physical condition. I mean about your being in a wheelchair.

Open Acknowledgement Condition

Respondent: Oh yeah sure. I know people are often curious about it but don't know how to bring it up. (PAUSE) Well, it's a big part of my life and I've had to adjust to it, especially with respect to interacting with other people. The main thing I've found is that it's usually best to bring it right out into the open when I first meet someone. You know to be open to talking about my disability if people want to, or answering any questions if people have them. I don't force the conversation to be

about my disability but I like to let people know that I'm open to discussing it if they want to or not if they don't want to. (PAUSE) Well,ok, I guess that's about it.

Self-pity Condition

Respondent: Yeah I guess so. (PAUSE) Well, its been a big problem that plagues me all the time, no matter what I try to do its there to make things difficult for me. I feel that's it made my life much more difficult than other people's, and sometimes I get pretty upset when I think of how easy other people have it and how tough it is on me. I just feel it really isn't fair[2]. I think to myself, why me? Why did this have to happen to me? Sometimes it just makes me so upset. I just feel so bad about it. It really just isn't fair.

---

[2] The remaining lines were added to the self-pity statement after the seventh subject had been tested in this condition. This should not have been done since this addition slightly modifies the manipulation. However, analyses presented in the results section show that this addition did not have a significat impact on subjects' responses.

Appendix C

Questions Presented to Subjects in Disability Conditions

1) How does your disability affect your social life? Does it intertere in making friends?

2) What are the aspects of your personality you like the most and the least?

3) How does your disability affect your love life? Can you still have sex?

4) What is your opinion of the Iran crisis?

5) Are you able to drive? How would you do it with the wheelchair?

6) How do you manage to get around the city in your wheelchair?

7) What do you feel the guiltiest about or most ashamed of in your life?

8) What are your favorite TV programs and why?

Appendix D

Interview Questions for Subjects in Nondisabled Condition

1) What types of social situations make you feel very uncomfortable? Describe a real life incident?

3) What is your sex life like?

5) Where do you stand on the abortion issue?

6) Who do you think should be our next president and why?

Appendix E

Multiple Affect Adjective Check List

On the next page you will find words which describe different kinds of moods and feelings. Mark an x in the boxes beside the words which describe how you feel right now. Some of the words may sound alike but we want you to check all the words that describe your feelings. Work rapidly.

1 ☐ active
2 ☐ adventurous
3 ☐ affectionate
4 ☐ afraid
5 ☐ agitated
6 ☐ agreeable
7 ☐ aggressive
8 ☐ alive
9 ☐ alone
10 ☐ amiable
11 ☐ amused
12 ☐ angry
13 ☐ annoyed
14 ☐ awful
15 ☐ bashful
16 ☐ bitter
17 ☐ blue
18 ☐ bored
19 ☐ calm
20 ☐ cautious
21 ☐ cheerful
22 ☐ clean
23 ☐ complaining
24 ☐ contented
25 ☐ contrary
26 ☐ cool
27 ☐ cooperative
29 ☐ critical
29 ☐ cross
30 ☐ cruel
31 ☐ daring
32 ☐ desperate
33 ☐ destroyed
34 ☐ devoted
35 ☐ disagreeable
36 ☐ discontented
37 ☐ discouraged
38 ☐ disgusted
39 ☐ displeased
40 ☐ energetic
41 ☐ enraged
42 ☐ enthusiastic
43 ☐ fearful
44 ☐ fine
45 ☐ fit
46 ☐ forlorn
47 ☐ frank
48 ☐ free
49 ☐ friendly
50 ☐ frightened
51 ☐ furious
52 ☐ gay
53 ☐ gentle
54 ☐ glad
55 ☐ gloomy
56 ☐ good
57 ☐ good-natured
58 ☐ grim
59 ☐ happy
60 ☐ healthy
61 ☐ hopeless
62 ☐ hostile
63 ☐ impatient
64 ☐ incensed
65 ☐ indignant
66 ☐ inspired
67 ☐ interested
68 ☐ irritated
69 ☐ jealous
70 ☐ joyful
71 ☐ kindly
72 ☐ lonely
73 ☐ lost
74 ☐ loving
75 ☐ low
76 ☐ lucky
77 ☐ mad
78 ☐ mean
79 ☐ meek
80 ☐ merry
81 ☐ mild
82 ☐ miserable
83 ☐ nervous
84 ☐ obliging
85 ☐ offended
86 ☐ outraged
87 ☐ panicky
88 ☐ patient
89 ☐ peaceful
90 ☐ pleased
91 ☐ pleasant
92 ☐ polite
93 ☐ powerful
94 ☐ quiet
95 ☐ reckless
96 ☐ rejected
97 ☐ rough
98 ☐ sad
99 ☐ safe
100 ☐ satisfied
101 ☐ secure
102 ☐ shaky
103 ☐ shy
104 ☐ soothed
105 ☐ steady
106 ☐ stubborn
107 ☐ stormy
108 ☐ strong
109 ☐ suffering
110 ☐ sullen
111 ☐ sunk
112 ☐ sympathetic
113 ☐ tame
114 ☐ tender
115 ☐ tense
116 ☐ terrible
117 ☐ terrified
118 ☐ thoughtful
119 ☐ timid
120 ☐ tormented
121 ☐ understanding
122 ☐ unhappy
123 ☐ unsociable
124 ☐ upset
125 ☐ vexed
126 ☐ warm
127 ☐ whole
128 ☐ wild
129 ☐ willful
130 ☐ wilted
131 ☐ worrying
132 ☐ young

Appendix F

Impression Rating Scale

Try to be as honest as you can in rating the person you just saw on the video tape. Your ratings will be used for research purposes only. Under no circumstances will they be shown to the person you are rating. In fact, your responses are anonymous. It is important that you express your true feelings. Please answer every item. When in doubt, just try to make your best judgement. Work quickly.

Please circle an X on each scale, at the point which represents your impression of the person you saw on the videotape.

X	X	X	X	X	X	X
very intelligent		somewhat intelligent		somewhat unintelligent		very unintelligent
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
very self-pitying		somewhat self-pitying		somewhat non-selfpitying		very non selfpitying
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
very friendly		somewhat friendly		somewhat unfriendly		very unfriendly
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
very inconsiderate		somewhat inconsiderate		somewhat considerate		very considerate
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
very incompetent		somewhat incompetent		somewhat competent		very competent
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
very creative		somewhat creative		somewhat uncreative		very uncreative
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
very maladjusted		somewhat maladjusted		somewhat well-adjusted		very well-adjusted

X very likeable	X	X somewhat likeable	X	X somewhat unlikeable	X	X very unlikeable
X very hardworking	X	X somewhat hardworking	X	X somewhat lazy	X	X very lazy
X very nervous	X	X somewhat nervous	X	X somewhat calm	X	X very calm
X very secure	X	X somewhat secure	X	X somewhat insecure	X	X very insecure
X very happy	X	X somewhat happy	X	X somewhat unhappy	X	X very unhappy
X very aggressive	X	X somewhat aggressive	X	X somewhat nonaggressive	X	X very nonaggressiv
X very self-accepting	X	X somewhat self-accepting	X	X somewhat self-rejecting	X	X very self-rejecti

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