

1.7 Understanding Power: Option 2

Objective:

Explore different kinds of power and vulnerability in society, and who has more or less power

Time:

20-30 minutes

Resources required:

- Print outs of character cards for participants
- Print out of statements for facilitators
- Large enough space for a group to move around

Facilitators instructions:

Move participants to an area with a lot of space where they can all line up across the room or space, and line up in one row next to each other, and give them all one “character card” (found at the end of this document).

Explain that you will read out a series of statements (see activity resources). If the statement is true for the character on the card, that participant may take one step forward.

Explain:

“To start the session we’re going to try and experience how power plays out in society.”

“I will read out a series of statements. If that statement is true for the character on your card, you may take one step forward. If it is not true, remain where you are. If you are unsure, ask the group what they think”

Encourage women to challenge men who step forward inappropriately (as their women characters), and challenge this yourself - this can be powerful for men in understanding the challenges faced by women. This activity can also be powerful for women in being able to experience the freedoms of men.

Discuss:

Lead a debrief using the following discussion questions.

What do we see at the end of this exercise? Who is in front? Who is behind? What did it feel like to move forward? What did it feel like to stay behind? What differences did you notice between women and between men? What does this difference mean to you? What other differences did you notice?

Key messages

This exercise is about the power and privilege that men enjoy in most societies simply by virtue of the unequal status and power afforded to them at birth. These differences are not based on skill or experience, but socialized power inequality, perpetuated by cultures and norms. Women experience this inequality throughout their lives, and it is the foundation upon which violence develops and is perpetuated. Of course, not all men are the same, and not all women are the same. Even within those groups, there are significant differences of power and privilege – associated with status, physical ability,

wealth, etc. However, even with those differences you'll notice that men are in general much further ahead than women.

Activity resources

Statements

These are statements for the facilitator to read out. These statements are about power, access to and control over resources and decision-making.

- I control the money that I earn
- My work is paid and generally well-considered
- I can travel around the camp/settlement/community easily
- I do not fear for my safety if I move around after dark
- I have leisure time
- I am among the first to speak in meetings
- My children have my family's name
- I am not generally afraid of being sexually assaulted or raped
My spouse (or someone else) looks after my children
- I can wear any clothes I like without fear of sexual assault
- I am of the same sex as the police, community leaders, religious leaders and others in positions of authority
- I have had the opportunity to be educated
- I decide when to have sexual relations with my partner
- I am free to speak your mind in public and in private
- My body is not routinely used as a source of sexual jokes and comments
- I do not expect to be publicly shamed or beaten with regard to my sexual behaviour
- I generally make decisions about how all the money in my household will be spent
- I can get access to services without being forced to engage in sexual acts
- I have priority in the use of family resources like bicycles, motorcycles or cars
- I do not have to account to my partner for where I have been or how I spend my time
- I am generally listened to by the leaders in my community
- I can determine when and how many children I have
- I can leave my spouse if he/she threatens my safety
- If a crime is committed against me, the police will listen to my case
- I can go to the police and not be worried about being threatened with arrest or violence
- I can travel anywhere I like without an escort

Character cards

Print, cut out the character cards before the activity.

Female, adult, refugee/IDP	Male, adult, refugee/IDP	Female, adolescent	Male, adolescent
Male, adult, religious leader	Male, adult, blind	Female, adult, blind	Male, adult, doctor
Female, adult, doctor	Male, adult, disabled	Female, adult, disabled	Female, adolescent, orphan
Female, adolescent, student	Male, adolescent, student	Female, adult, widow	Male, adult, unmarried

Adapted from IRC 2007 Core Concepts in GBV and 2017 Interagency Gender-based Violence Case Management Training: Facilitator's Guide