

Worksheet 1: The values hunt

Please complete the following list of statements. It is not necessary to agonise over your answer – respond to each question as spontaneously and honestly as you can.

Statement	Yes	No
We should bring back the death penalty		
Cannabis should be legalised		
We live in a racist society		
Gay people should not be allowed to adopt children		
We should have more speed cameras		
Parents should stay together for the sake of their children		
Religion is good for your health		
Asylum seekers enrich our society		
White couples should be allowed to adopt black children		
People convicted of drink driving should face a lifetime ban		

Worksheet 2: Four types of power

Read the four descriptions below and, with the aid of your partner(s), identify at least one example of each that relates to your work. When you have completed this, compare notes with one another about the significance of these four types of power for your work.

Power to

This refers to someone's ability or capability, often linked to status or position. This can be a very positive form of power to develop, as it is linked to people having greater control over their lives and circumstances.

Example:

Power over

This refers to dominance – that is, when one person has control over others. When this type of power is legitimate, we call it 'authority' (for example, when a manager insists that an employee do something that is reasonably part of their job). When it is not legitimate, it can amount to abuse or oppression (for example, when someone coerces another person into a sexual relationship).

Example:

Power from within

This refers to being able to draw on our inner strengths, to find whatever personal resources we need to deal with our circumstances. For example, many people have found that, when faced with great danger, they find a courage they didn't know they had.

Example:

Power with

This refers to solidarity, the power we get from working together and supporting one another. People can be much stronger and more effective when they work collectively, rather than in isolation.

Example:

Worksheet 3: Making sense of empowerment

Statements to consider:

Empowerment sounds OK in principle, but it's not realistic in practice.

Comment:

Power is oppressive.

Comment:

Empowerment involves professionals giving their power away, and I can't see them being prepared to do that.

Comment:

You can't give people power; they can only take it.

Comment:

You can't empower people against their will.

Comment:

There are two types of people in society: the powerful and the powerless.

Comment:

Worksheet 4: Recognising power

In this exercise you will be watching a video presentation that shows people interacting. Your task is to watch the video very carefully and identify examples of power being used. The following aspects of power should help you with this. You may want to make some very brief notes under each heading as you watch the presentation or straight after.

Position/location (e.g. standing over somebody).

Use of language (e.g. giving orders, or using terms that suggest dominance or subordination).

Efforts to influence (e.g. persuading/cajoling).

Use of body language (e.g. smiling/gestures etc.).

Tone of voice/loudness etc.

Clothing (e.g. uniform or 'power dressing').

Anything else?

Worksheet 5: Using Transactional Analysis (TA) for empowerment

Parent-parent

This combination involves a power battle. Each person is trying to pressurise the other into submission. The result can be harmful for both parties as a result of the fallout from the conflicts involved. This can also cause problems for other people: relatives, friends, colleagues and so on.

Parent-child

This is where one person dominates another and the person being dominated allows this to happen, i.e. does not fight back (if he or she did fight back, the relationship would be parent-parent, as described above). The reasons for not fighting back can be complex; it is certainly not simply a matter of being a 'weak' person.

Child-child

In situations involving this combination neither party is prepared to take responsibility in an adult fashion. An example of this would be two people who complain to each other about something they are not happy with, but neither takes any steps to address the problem – so they end up reinforcing one another's sense of helplessness.

Adult-adult

This combination provides a sound foundation for promoting empowerment. It involves each party treating the other with respect, being prepared to listen to one another, and so on. This enables the individuals concerned to have confidence in themselves and to feel in control of their lives and circumstances without feeling dominated or overawed. It does not automatically produce empowerment, but it certainly produces a much stronger platform for this than the other combinations do.

(N.B. The above combinations apply to relationships between adults. The aim is to promote adult–adult relationships. Relationships between adults and children can be more complex. While parent–child relationships are clearly appropriate during childhood, one of the aims of parenting is ultimately to develop adult–adult relationships with our children.)

Worksheet 6: The power of language

Consider each of the comments listed here and see if you can come up with more empowering, less problematic or judgemental alternatives.

Alan is not very bright – he was a failure at school.

Mrs Smith is a poor coper.

The Coopers are a problem family.

Tracy is maladjusted.

Parekh is a third generation immigrant.

Robin is a difficult person to get on with.

The whole family have loose morals.

Tim is a violent man.