

Empowerment

It's Intersectional

The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

Overview:

In this workshop, you will be building a clearer understanding of empowerment through group discussions based on topics on discrimination, oppression, and different forms of power. This workshop includes an interactive activity that will get the participants thinking about the different perceptions of power. There will also be group discussions focused on analysis of power portrayed in different forms of media, followed by reflection on how this knowledge can be application on campus and in the community. The session ends with an action item that encourages empowerment in our every day lives.

Category:

Leadership skills, Community building, Diversity

Level:

Applicable for all students interested in gaining more knowledge about the different intersections of empowerment.


Recommended

Bonner Sequence:

This training is geared towards all levels or as part of the Dialogue Across Diversity and Inclusion 4x4 model, Stage 4: Adaptation.



Senior Year

Dialogue Across Diversity and Inclusion 4x4 Student Developmental Model			
Stage 1: Exposure	Stage 2: Understanding	Stage 3: Application and Discussion	Stage 4: Adaptation
			

Focus or Goals of this Guide:

- 1.) Participants will learn and understand different forms of power.
- 2.) Participants will take away that there are many different interpretations and perceptions of power based on personal experience.
- 3.) Participants will reflect on their own life experiences that they may not have considered significant or impactful before this session.
- 4.) Participants will leave with their own idea on how they will empower the community they belong to with the information they have learned today.

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing utensils
- Projector for presentation (Accessible through Slideshare: <https://www.slideshare.net/BonnerFoundation/empowerment-its-intersectional>)
- Computer
- Open space to accommodate the icebreaker

How to Prepare:

As the facilitator, it is important for you to understand that this is mainly a discussion-based workshop. There may be times when people are uncomfortable and not willing to answer, so it is important to leave space for silence and understanding for those who do not wish to share openly with the group. Establish in the beginning the practice of using "I" statements when referencing one's own experiences so you are not representing a whole group. Make sure you read through the guide and presentation, and go through the media content on the slides so you have familiarized yourself with the content before the training starts. Remember to set up the presentation and work out any technical problems before the training begins so the presentation and media content is ready when you start.

Brief Outline:

The activities and questions are geared toward making the participants think about different types of power and how people utilize their influence to either empower or disempower other individuals. Participants will start with an activity to show them that there are different ways power is perceived and enforced. Participants will engage in discussion topics of power, oppression, and discrimination. They will watch videos and analyze pictures and discuss the forms of empowerment and disempowerment

within these videos and pictures as one big group. Participants will also get a chance to discuss and share their own personal experiences and the concept of empowerment within a community. The personal experiences will be discussed in smaller groups first and then as one large group.

The outline has the following parts:

This workshop should take 90 minutes.

1) Safe Space Norms	suggested time 5 minutes
2) Power Stance	suggested time 15 minutes
3) Kinds of Power	suggested time 10 minutes
4) Empowerment Through Entertainment	suggested time 30 minutes
5) Empowerment in Our Lives	suggested time 10 minutes
6) Empowerment in the Community	suggested time 10 minutes
7) Empowerment in Practice	suggested time 10 minutes

Part 1) Safe Space Norms

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Create a safe space by listing the safe space norms for dialogue and elaborating on each norm. Emphasize that all participants who are involved in the workshop are required to abide by the safe space norms in order to ensure that everyone is comfortable with what will be shared during this workshop. The norms can be found on the handout with more detail.

Safe Space Norms for Dialogue:

- Make "I" statements
- Be aware of non-verbal expressions
- "Seek first to understand, then to be understood"
- "Tell me more..."
- Respect Different Opinions
- Silence is O.K.
- What is said in groups, stays in groups
- Encourage participation
- Say "Ouch"

Part 2) Power Stance

Suggested time: 15 minutes

The point of this section is to get the participants thinking about power using an icebreaker activity. The goal of this icebreaker is to put yourself in a position of power that is higher than someone else using a power pose.

Below are some examples (but not limited to):



Explain the rules of the activity:

- Introduce the activity as an icebreaker
- Get everyone to stand in a circle
- As the facilitator, you will start off the game by standing in the middle of the circle.
- Strike a “powerful” pose of your choosing.
- Ask for a volunteer to come up and make a power pose that they believe holds more power than yours.
- The rest of the group will give a thumbs up or down to show if their pose holds higher power than the initial person.
 - If majority is thumbs down, then the volunteer must try again.
 - If majority is thumbs up, then the volunteer remains in their chosen pose in the center of the circle, and you will join the outer circle.
- Another person will come up and do a power pose they believe is of higher power than the volunteer’s pose in the center.
- The process then repeats.

(Before you begin the actual game, have another volunteer help demonstrate first so everyone understands and establish a rule, out of respect for others and their personal space there should be no touching throughout the course of this activity)

You should leave 5 minutes to explain the rules and to give a demonstration of the activity. 5 minutes to do the activity as a group, and the remaining 5 minutes for reflections.

*Times can be adjusted if needed

Here are a few reflection questions you should ask:
(you will also find these questions on **slide 2**)

- What did you see during the activity?
- How did it make you feel after seeing specific poses?
- What do you think is the message of this activity?

(ask each question individually so that the participants have time to answer each one.)

Follow this script:

The purpose of this activity is to demonstrate that power is perceived and understood differently based on our own individual experiences. Power does not have a single explanation and can change from person to person."

Note: Before going on to the next part, make sure the presentation is up and ready.

Part 3) Kinds of Power

Suggested time: 10 minutes

This section is going to dive into how we understand and perceive power. The participants will dig deeper into the icebreaker activity by answering a series of questions, and participants will be introduced to a few definitions of terms that will show up often in the course of the training.

Discuss the Power Pose activity by asking the participants. These questions can be found on **slide 3**: (this should take about 10 minutes)

- What types of power did you see occur during the "Power Pose" activity?
- For the poses where majority gave it a thumbs down, why do you think the pose didn't hold a higher sense of power than the other?
- For the poses where majority gave it a thumbs up, why do you think the pose held a higher sense of power?
- Which poses did you find empowering and why?

- Which poses did you find disempowering and why?

(Ask each question separately leaving time in between each for the participants to answer them.)

As the facilitator, make sure you have your own thoughts and opinions on these questions as well, so you are able to give participants examples and extra support to encourage dialogue.

Follow this script:

Through the Power Pose activity, you've portrayed, in many ways, acts of empowerment and disempowerment. As stated before, the purpose of the activity is to try to put yourself in a position of higher power, but keep in mind, power is not always visible. This activity showed the visible, and physical manifestations of power, however, power is not always portrayed this way. After answering the last two questions above we established which poses seemed to be more empowering and which ones seemed to lean more towards disempowering. To move onto the next portion of our training, what words do you associate with empowerment?

(The question at the end of the script can be found on **slide 4**)

(give the participants a minute to think it over and share their answers.)

Script continues:

The word empowerment is multi-dimensional and has several meanings, and has a different meaning for each person.

(The definitions and questions below will be found on will be found on **slides 5 & 6**)

- *According to Google, and other sites, empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights*
- *Another site called the Racial Equality Resource Guide defines empowerment as when target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and their subordinate status and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably.*
- *According to bemidjstate.edu, empowerment "indicates the intent to, and the process of, assisting individuals, groups, families and communities to discover and expend the resources and tools within and around them."*

Ask the participants these questions separately so they have time in between to answer.

- What these definitions have in common?
- Why is empowerment important?

(Ask them each question above separately. *Give them a minute to think it over before they share their answers.*)

As the facilitator, you should have your own thoughts about the second question as well, in case they need some guidance. For example: *"All these definitions enable someone."* Or something along those lines

Script: You can't adequately talk about empowerment without talking about a few other key words. Throughout the course of this training we will also be using terms like disempower and oppression to analyze the power in entertainment and ourselves.

Give the participants a definition of disempowerment and oppression like the ones below:

- **Disempower:** to cause (a person or a group of people) to be less likely than others to succeed or to prevent (a person or group) from having power, authority, or influence.
<http://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/disempower>
- **Oppression:** Oppression signifies a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privileged groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups.
<http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

Part 4) Empowerment Through Entertainment

Suggested time: 30

This section is going to focus on what empowerment looks like in the media. The participants are going to be analyzing power through a variety of examples like music, movie clips, photos and videos. Example 1 and 2 should take about 15 minutes and example 3 and 4 should take another 15 minutes.

Follow script:

We live in a time where social media and pop culture is a big part of our lives. Take a minute to think about what empowerment looks like in our culture today. For example,

a specific celebrity, a certain album, or maybe a movie? There is no right or wrong answer, I just want your thoughts and opinions.

- Ask at least 2-3 volunteers to share what they think empowerment looks like in today's culture.
- Ask the participants why the examples they have given are forms of empowerment?
- Ask them what makes them powerful? And what kind of empowerment is it?

Continue and ask the participants what disempowerment looks like?
(*give them 1 minute to think it over before answering*)

Also, inform the participants that they are going to be shown a series of examples that they will be analyzing.

Example 1) The first clip will be a scene from Matilda. In this scene, Matilda tells her father he is a crook for selling cars for more than their actual worth. He tells her, "I'm smart; you're dumb. I'm big; you're little. I'm right; you're wrong. And there's nothing you can do about it." He does this while standing over his daughter and pointing his finger at her. This scene portrays how he disempowers his daughter with his parental authority. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WoN5cCs0l2M> play the clip from 0:10-0:51.

For this example, you should leave 6 minutes total: one minute for the video, three minutes for the participants to answer the questions, and two minutes to debrief as a group.

This example and the questions you can find on **slide 7:**

Ask the participants a stream of questions to get a discussion going.

- What were some signs of power you saw in the clip? Body language, words, was there power of hierarchy.
- What system of oppression did you see while watching, if any?

(If they need help name off a couple like, sexual orientation, race, religion)

As the facilitator, you should know that the system of oppression showed is age and gender.

Example 2) The next video is a clip of Robin Gerber speaking about the time Eleanor Roosevelt had given Marian Anderson, an African American Contralto singer, the

platform to sing at the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Constitution Hall after she was told she couldn't because of the color of her skin.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQCxiLVAXS0>

This example and the questions can be found on **slide 8:**

Since this video is about 5 minutes long, if necessary you can cut it short however you see fit.

Ask the same questions for this video that were asked above. You should be aware that the obvious form of oppression in this video is race.

Example 3) The next example is a short film trailer called "BOY" It is a Danish short film about a transgender boy whose mother does not fully understand why her "daughter" is acting so strange. The mother at first does not want to come to terms with the idea that her "daughter" is a boy. However, in the actual film, she starts to come around in the end.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeybYkdix0s>

For this example, you are going to have to open the video in the internet browser.

This example's questions can be found on **slide 9:**

Ask the participants

- What were some signs of power you saw in the clip? Body language, words, was there power of hierarchy.
- What system of oppression did you see while watching, if any?

Example 4)

This example you are going to show the participants a series of quotes from different empowering women. As the facilitator, you are going to read off each quote and then ask the participants a series of questions that they are going to answer.

This example's quotes and questions can be found on **slides 10 & 11:**

- What is empowering about these quotes? How do they make you feel?
- What kind of empowerment do you find in these quotes. Individually or collectively?

Part 5) Empowerment in Our Own Lives

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Note that the next string of questions are more on the personal side and that people may not be comfortable discussing their answers. Direct the participants to get into small groups with the people around them to discuss the next few questions. For each question, they will stay in the same small groups and reintroduce the safe space norms.

Questions Section 1

In small groups, participants should discuss the following prompts:

- Ask them to think of a time when they were empowered by someone?
- Who was it?
- How did they empower you?

These questions can be found on **slide 12**

After the small group discussion, allow everyone the opportunity to share with the whole group, if they would like.

Questions Section 2

In small groups, participants should discuss the following prompts:

- Think of a time when you disempowered someone else.
- Was it intentional or unintentional?
- Who was this person?
- How did you disempower them?

These questions can be found on **slide 13**

After the small group, discussion allow everyone the opportunity to share with the whole group, if they would like.

Questions Section 3

In small groups, participants should discuss the following prompts:

- Have you ever felt disempowered by someone?
- By who?
- What did they do to make you feel disempowered?

These questions can be found on **slide 14**

After the small group discussion, allow everyone the opportunity to share with the whole group.

As the facilitator, you are welcome to share your own personal stories as well.

Part 6) Empowerment in the Community

Suggested time: 10 minutes

For this section, you are going to talk about what empowerment looks like in a community. Leave these questions as open discussion questions for everyone to share out their thoughts. Give the participant 3 minutes to think about each question and to share their answers if they would like. The last minute of this section will be left for any final thoughts on what we have covered throughout the training. Remember these questions are to be asked individually.

Community building is one of Bonner's 6 common commitments. Ask the participants what empowerment looks like in a community?

- What does empowerment look like in a community?
- How do you plan to take this information and apply it to your community work?
- Why is community empowerment important?

These questions can be found on **slide 15**

Part 7) Empowerment in Practice

Suggested time: 10 minutes

This section contains an activity where the participants are going to write to someone who has empowered them.

- Instruct the participants to send a message to someone who has empowered them and tell that person why.
- Give them the option of either writing a letter or sending a text.
- If they want to write a letter, pass out paper and writing utensils.

(Remember that the time of the training can be adjusted to fit the needs of the facilitator.)

Credit:

"Disempower - Definition for English-Language Learners from Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary." N.p., n.d. Web. 4 Aug. 2017.

"Empowering Employees Can Bring Rewards for HK Managers | South China Morning Post." N.p., n.d. Web. 14 July 2017.

"Empowerment - Google Search." N.p., n.d. Web. 3 Aug. 2017.

Fisher, Lauren Alexis. "35 Inspiring Quotes About Empowerment for Women - Best Feminist Quotes." Web. 4 Aug. 2017.

"Glossary | Racial Equity Resource Guide." N.p., n.d. Web. 4 Aug. 2017.

"IUC Journal of Social Work Theory and Practice." N.p., n.d. Web. 3 Aug. 2017.

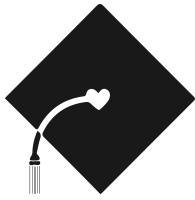
Lucas Helth. "BOY" - *SHORT FILM (TRAILER)*. N.p., 2014. Film

Movieclips. *Matilda (1996) - I'm Smart, You're Dumb Scene (2/10) | Movieclips*. N.p., 2017. Film.

"Oppression of Women in The Handmaid's Tale, The Jewel, and the World Today - 416Lit.Com." N.p., n.d. Web. 14 July 2017.

"Power Posing For A Better Performance." N.p., n.d. Web. 14 July 2017.

Robin Gerber. *Leaders Empower Others to Lead!* N.p., 2013. Film.



Safe Space Norms for Dialogue

Make "I" Statements

Phrases like "I think" or "I feel" or "in my experience" can prevent another person from feeling attacked by your comments.

Be aware of non-verbal expressions

Our body speaks volumes. Give some thought to how what you are "saying" affects others.

"Seek first to understand, then to be understood"

In other words, be open and listen generously-put aside thoughts of what you want to say next.

"Tell me more..."

Ask clarifying questions. Probe gently to understand a viewpoint different from your own. Find out how people arrive at their opinions, not just what their opinions are.

Silence is O.K.

There are lots of ways to participate. Actively listening or listening closely can be one form of participation.

Respect Different Opinions

Be open to conflicting viewpoints and do your best to make this a safe space for each other.

What is Said in Groups, Stays in Groups

Psychological safety comes from knowing that our comments won't be repeated elsewhere or attributed in another context. In other words, take the learning and leave the names.

Encourage participation

Please allow everyone to speak. Try not to monopolize the conversation.

Say "Ouch"

If you feel that a comment might be hurtful; be prepared to gently explain how you understand a comment to be painful.