

Three Types of Power Balances in Relationships

Session 8 Handout

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Type 1: Equal power: friend, sibling, co-worker, partner, team member

Type 2: Individual has more power: parent, teacher, employer, supervisor, coach

Type 3: Individual has less power: child, student, employee

Trauma generated barriers in each type of relationship

Type 1 Block: Although equal in power, you may perceive yourself as having more or less power. This may lead to thinking about work colleagues, friends or family members as threats or enemies. You may expect them to be aggressive, competitive or exploit you. You may feel the need to be vigilant and aggressive yourself. You act as if you have more power and authority than you actually have to protect yourself. You may need to keep a distance from them, not trust them.

Type 2 Block: Someone has more power than you. You expect them to be exploitative. You feel anxious and worried. If they are your boss, you may be too eager to please, find it difficult to say no, or not ask for the authority or resources you need or want because you are afraid they will hurt you. Alternatively, you get angry and accuse them being exploitative when that might not be true but you were too afraid to ask about things you were seeing going on and made your own interpretation.

Type 3 Block: **You have more power than others.** This makes you very uncomfortable. You cannot execute your authority and you do a bad job (as a boss, parent or leader). You are afraid to be abusive when you use power, so you don't exert it at all. Sometimes, you do exert your power but you find yourself acting mean or abusive.

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