

Power Dynamics in Mentoring Relationships

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Activity

How did you feel about the
role you were given?

For those of you who were
tapped twice, how did you
choose to do what you wanted?

There are three types of power dynamics.



Visible Power:

The formal rules, structures, and institutions that inform decision-making

(WUR, 2012)

There are three types of power dynamics.

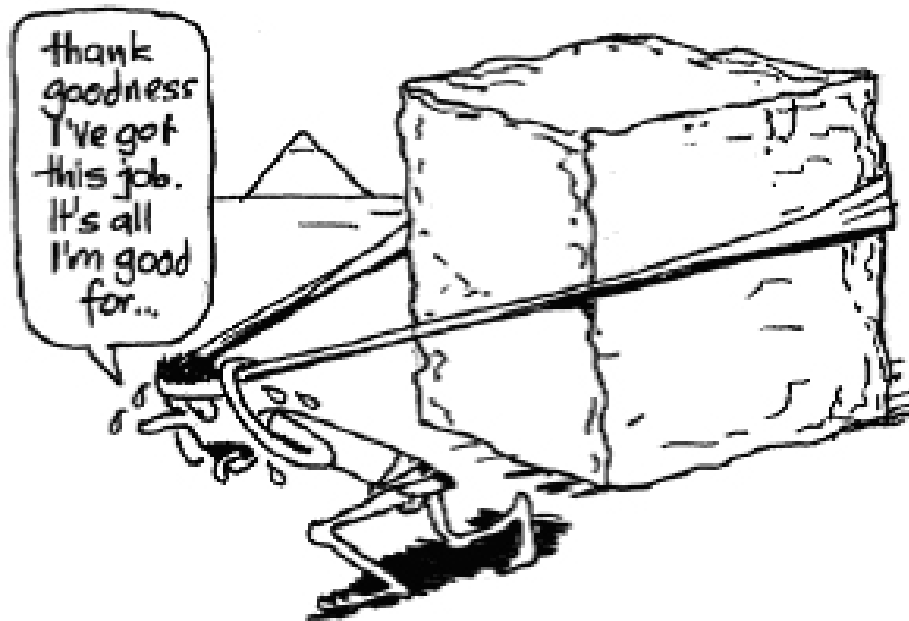


Hidden Power:

When those in power set agendas that maintain power structures in decision-making

(WUR, 2012)

There are three types of power dynamics.



Invisible Power:

When those in power set agendas that maintain power structures and manipulate those with less power about their perceived role in decision-making

(WUR, 2012)

How did visible, hidden, and
invisible power play a role in
our activity?

Power dynamics in mentoring relationships can hinder mentee success.



THE ADVICE THAT MENTORS
OFFER CAN IMPACT THE SUCCESS
OF THE MENTEE



IMPLICIT BIAS AFFECTS THE ADVICE
THAT MENTORS PROVIDE

(e.g. Brinson and Kottler, 1993; Thomas, 2001)

In our activity, how did the decisions of the people who were given freedom to do what they wanted impact the abilities of others?

Mentees
prefer
mentors
like them.

Similar personality type

Similar values

Same gender

Same ethnicity

Same sexual orientation

Case Studies

- How are visible, hidden, and invisible power present in the different case studies?
- How did the actions of the mentor affect the success and perceptions of the mentee?
- What advice would you offer the people in these scenarios?

How can we apply some of the lessons learned from the discussion and activity to our own mentoring relationships?

So what can we do about all of this?



Be patient with your mentors and mentees.



Engage in open communication with mentors and mentees.



Be mature and respectful when giving and receiving criticism.



Reach out to other potential mentors.



Remember your personal motives for pursuing an opportunity.

Resources

- Hansman, C. A. Diversity and Power in Mentoring Relationships. URL: <https://www.calpro-online.org/eric/docs/mott/mentoring6.pdf>
- Kalbfleisch, P. J. (2000) Similarity and attraction in business and academic environments: Same and cross-sex mentoring relationships. *Review of Business*, 21, 58-61.
- Ervin, E. (1995) Power, frustration, and “fierce negotiation” in mentoring relationships: Four women tell their stories. *Women’s Studies*, 24, 447-81.
- Wageningen University & Research (WUR). (2012) Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships: Forms of power. URL: <http://www.mspguide.org/tool/forms-power>