



Power, Privilege, &
Microaggressions....Oh My

Power

● What is power?

Power

- Power:

- Can be defined as having “power over” or the ability to coerce another’s behavior. Can also include access to social, political and economic resources (Shaw, 2012).

- Power operates in systems of oppression.

Key Concepts in Examining Power

- **Institutional Power**-the ability or official authority to decide what is best for others. The ability to decide who will have access to resources. The capacity to exercise control over others.
- **Prejudice-Judgment** or opinion that is formed on insufficient grounds before facts are known or in disregard of facts that contradict it. Prejudices are learned and can be unlearned.

Key Concepts in Examining Power

- Oppression-The combination of prejudice and institutional power which creates a SYSTEM that discriminates against some groups (target groups) and benefits other groups (dominant groups).
- Examples of these systems-the “isms”
 - Racism
 - Sexism
 - Heterosexism
 - Ageism

Privilege

- Gives advantages, favors, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of target groups.
- Privilege is characteristically invisible to people who have it.
- Persons in dominant groups often believe that they have earned the privileges that they enjoy or that everyone could have access to these privileges if only they worked to earn them.
- Privileges are unearned and they are granted to persons in the dominant groups whether they want those privileges or not, and regardless of their stated intent.

Privilege

- Unpacking the invisible knapsack (McIntosh, 1989)

Think about.....

- In what ways and from what sources do people get power?
- In what ways do people use their privilege?
- In what situations and contexts are you most aware of your own power?
- Why do issues of power and privilege matter when working with families?
- How do you feel talking about power and privilege? Why?

Microaggressions

- What are microaggressions?
 - Term first surfaced in 1970s. Racial microaggressions are the brief and everyday slights, insults, indignities and denigrating messages sent to people of color by well-intentioned others (Sue & Rivera, 2010)

Microaggressions

- Microaggressions can be classified into 3 types:
 - Microassaults-conscious and intentional discriminatory actions. Examples: using negative racial terms, displaying swastikas, forbidding children to date outside of their race.
 - Microinsults-Verbal, nonverbal and environmental communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity that demean a person's racial heritage or identity. Examples: an employee who asks a co-worker of color how he/she got his/her job; implying he/she may have got the job through affirmative action or quota system.
 - Microinvalidations: Communications that subtly exclude, negate, or nullify the thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color. Examples: asking Latinos where they were born, conveying the message that they are perpetual foreigners in their own land; You speak such good English,

<http://youtu.be/nDR27rfe1dg>