
Tip Sheet: Starting with Ourselves

Transforming power dynamics to end gender-based violence is a process that begins with ourselves- as individuals, and GBV practitioners. Organizations and teams that implement GBV programs can reflect on their own dynamics related to gender and power. A structured process can help GBV teams take steps to address power imbalances within their organization and between their organization and communities.

- **Conduct weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly reflection exercises with staff and volunteers to explore issues of gender and power.**
- **Commit to increasing balance of power within the workplace.**
 - Supervisors model positive uses of power.
 - Maintain mutually respectful communication between staff at all levels.
 - Create opportunities for all staff to meaningfully contribute to decisions.
 - Provide opportunities for staff to provide feedback and review their supervisors.
 - Value the contributions of all staff members.
 - Prioritize wellbeing of staff, volunteers, and partners.
- **Avoid reinforcing or mirroring power imbalances from the community within the workplace**
 - Ensure that women are well-represented within staffing structures, including senior management.
 - Build teams that reflect the diversity of communities.
- **Take actions to balance power between staff and community members**
 - Respect the equality, dignity, and worth of all community members. Value their expertise, experience, and contributions.
 - Appreciate the humanity of community members, including community leaders, engaging with them as people rather than “beneficiaries,” “target groups,” or “subjects” of assessments. Get to know them.
 - Whenever possible, sit amongst groups you engage, at the same level.
 - Be attentive to how your dress, modes of transportation, communication equipment and other items may be perceived as symbols of power. Find ways to minimize the use or visibility of items that set you apart from others.
 - Ensure that community members have opportunities to provide feedback to your organization and multiple means to report any suspected abuses of power.

Self-Reflection Exercises¹

GBV teams can make a practice of regularly organizing reflection exercises. Team members can rotate responsibility for introducing or leading exercises, which can take many forms. Below are two examples adapted from Raising Voices.

Exploring Our Values Exercise #1

Read Together or Independently:

Values are the qualities that we most deeply believe in and that we can use to guide our choices and actions. They form the foundation from which we live. Our values are so much a part of us that we often do not even notice them. Defining our values is an ongoing process. As time passes and as we grow and experience life, our values can change. Reflecting on our values brings useful self-awareness. When we live our values, we feel better about ourselves, more fulfilled and less stressed. Further, we contribute to the greater good, adding strength and positivity to our relationships and communities. Our actions inspire others to live their values, and we attract friends who share the values we are exhibiting.

Independent Exercise:

Use a journal or paper and pen. Think about two personal values that you would like to practice more often in the things you say and do. For each of these values, complete the following:

- **The first value I want to make more dominant in my life is...**
 - Because...
 - I will do so by...
- **The second value I want to make more dominant in my life is...**
 - Because...
 - I will do so by...

Group Discussion:

Talk as a team about the exercise. Team members can share values they identified in the personal exercise but should not be required to do so.

- What were your reflections reading about values?
- How did you find the exercise? What did you learn about yourself?
- Does our team have common values that we try to uphold?

¹ Adapted from: Raising Voices. SASA! Together: An activist approach for preventing violence against women. Kampala, Uganda, 2020 which was adapted from the original source: GBV Prevention Network / Raising Voices. Get Moving! Kampala, Uganda, 2012.

Living Our Values Exercise #2

Read Together or Independently:

Whether or not we are aware of it, our values influence our every move. But that does not mean we are always acting according to our values. Sometimes our values tell us to act one way, but we still decide to act another. Sometimes we do not even realize that our actions are contradicting our values. Many things can stop us from acting according to our values: fear, pressure, distraction, stress, greed, etc. Acting according to our values requires conscious effort.

Independent Exercise:

Use a journal or paper and pen.

- Draw three vertical lines to create four columns on the page, like in the table here.
- List three personal values in the first column.
- For each value, indicate:
 - Actions you usually take to follow that value
 - Actions you sometimes take that contradict that value.
 - The impact, or consequences that not following the value has on your life.

Value	Follow	Contradict	Consequences
1			
2			
3			

Group Discussion:

Talk as a team about the exercise. Team members can share values they identified in the personal exercise but should not be required to do so.

- What were your reflections during this exercise?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- Were you surprised by anything?
- Did you reflect on any changes you would like to make?