

# POWER PLAYS

Power  
Violence  
Control  
Gender  
Stereotypes  
Abuse  
Gender-based violence

- ✓ 1. To help learners understand the variety of ways in which power and control can be exercised in relationships.
- 🕒 30-45 minutes
- ★ Worksheet & Teacher answer key (provided)

## PROCEDURE

- 1 Divide the class into groups of 4 to 6 learners.
- 2 Begin the exercise by explaining that there are many ways to exercise **power** in relationships that do not include the use of force or physical **violence**. This activity is designed to highlight some of the non-physical ways by which power and **control** can be exercised in relationships.
- 3 Hand out copies of the 'Power Play' worksheet (provided).
- 4 Ask the groups to fill in the table by listing examples of power resources that are used by men and by women, and those that are used by both **genders**. You should explain that the learners will have to rely on **stereotypes** for the purposes of this exercise, but underline that this does not mean that all women or all men work in these ways.
- 5 Ask the groups to share their answers, and write a consolidated list on the board. Make special note of points of disagreement – for example, where one group has listed a particular resource in one column while others have placed it elsewhere.
- 6 Ask learners to reflect (and debate) which resources should not be used in influencing others.
- 7 Wrap up the exercise by asking learners to list the kinds of attitudes and behaviours that can facilitate a positive and equal relationship. Refer to the Teacher Answer Key (provided) for some ideas.

## TEACHER TIPS



### General

Remember to provide examples of power mechanisms, including those that are subtle abuses of power. A list is attached below (Teacher Answer Key), but teachers should also include behaviours that are context-, age-, and school-specific.

Teachers should also make the distinction between using power (in a positive sense) and engaging in abusive behaviour and/or power plays to influence others' actions (negative).

This exercise can be used as follow-up to a lesson on physical force or violence in order to broaden the learner's understanding on abuses of power in relationships. (See Ch4, Ex4)



### Making the Link with Gender and Violence

The exercises address gender-based violence by making learners aware of forms of violence other than direct physical force.



### Assessment Ideas

As the exercise is mainly based on group discussion, there isn't much room for individual assessment other than each learner's ability to participate in the group discussion and articulate an opinion.





# POWER PLAY: TEACHER'S ANSWER SHEET

The following list includes examples of power play used by men, women and by both genders.

Used by Men	Used by Both	Used by Women
Hitting	Pushing	Slapping
Kicking	Bribery	Pulling hair
Punching	Criticising	Manipulating
Owning, using (threat to use) weapons	Controlling/harassing through texts	Asking others to report or spy on someone
Following someone	Threats of suicide	Exaggerating or faking distress, illness or emergencies
Sulking	Flirting/being sexy	Being angry if something isn't good enough
Cutting off communication	Throwing items	Creating crises to focus attention on themselves
Cutting off from friends	Breaking possessions	Withholding affection
Isolating	Criticising friends/family	
Physically threatening	Criticising appearance	
Restraining	Calling names	
Ridiculing (gender-specific e.g. women are so weak)	Ridiculing	
Keeping someone from doing something that they want to do	Ridiculing of belief systems	
Being angry if things are not to their liking	Threatening to leave/break up	
Pressuring to engage in sex acts that are painful or humiliating	Not giving someone the chance to explain	
Brushing against	Having the last word	
Sexually suggestive comments or gestures	Rumours about sexuality	
Refusing to allow contraception/condoms/lubricants	Pressure to have sex	
Restraining		

# TEACHER'S ANSWER KEY

---

**The following are some positive behaviours that can facilitate an equal, good and open relationship:**

- Open conversation
- Listening
- Honesty
- Trust
- Respect
- Accessing sex and health information together
- Emotionally supporting each other
- Respecting the other's space, and boundaries
- Respecting the other's decisions about their body (including clothes and appearance)
- Encouraging of friendships outside the relationship
- Thinking about effects and consequences of your actions (on yourself and your partner)
- Putting sexual health needs above wants, desires and experimentation
- Making decisions that align with needs and values of both partners