

Using **Power** with awareness and emotional competence



**From automatic
to conscious
use of power**

Follow-up course
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Referencing and acknowledging the iCARE-Haaland model

- *Please feel free to use and adapt the material in this presentation, and the model it is built on, by referring to the model, and the authors:*
- This presentation is adapted from «***Using power with awareness and emotional competence***», which is part of the learning materials in the iCARE-Haaland model.
- **To reference this content please use the following:** Haaland A, with Boga M, 2020. Communicating with awareness and emotional competence: introducing the iCARE-Haaland model for health professionals across cultures. With contributions from training teams, Vicki Marsh and Sassy Molyneux
- <https://connect.tghn.org/training/icare-haaland-model/>
- The authors' names should remain on the presentation, with a by line recognizing the person who (has adapted and) is presenting the presentation

Group discussion:

Why do we use power?

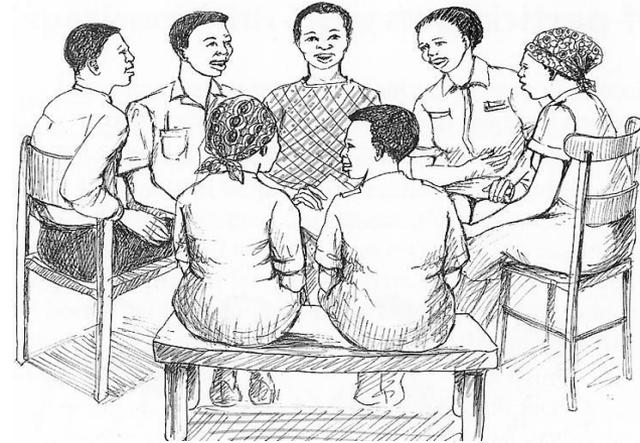
Share examples:

- *Have you ever been in a situation where you used power on juniors, colleagues or patients at work?*

➤ What were reasons you used power?

➤ How did you feel?

- *Has there been any situation where someone has used power on you?*



Skills: The space to step back

- *«Between stimulus and response there is a space. In this space lies our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth, and our freedom.»*
 - Viktor Frankl, professor in psychiatry, and holocaust survivor
- ***What is the link to emotional competence?***
- ***What is the link to using power, with awareness?***

Learning objectives

1. To strengthen **awareness** on how power is used **automatically**:
 - Different ways/methods of showing power to patients and colleagues
 - Reasons (conscious and subconscious) for using power
 - Effect (also emotional) on the person using power
 - Effect (also emotional) on the person on whom power is being used
2. To strengthen **awareness** on how power can be used **consciously**:
 - Defining clear objectives for what you intend to achieve
 - Defining strategies for how to use power consciously to achieve objectives
 - Using reflection methods to assess if and how power was used consciously, and assess effect on the other person(s), including effect on emotions
3. To strengthen **skills** to use power **consciously**:
 - Recognize emotions, take a step back and choose appropriate action
 - Manage emotions and communicate well, using power consciously

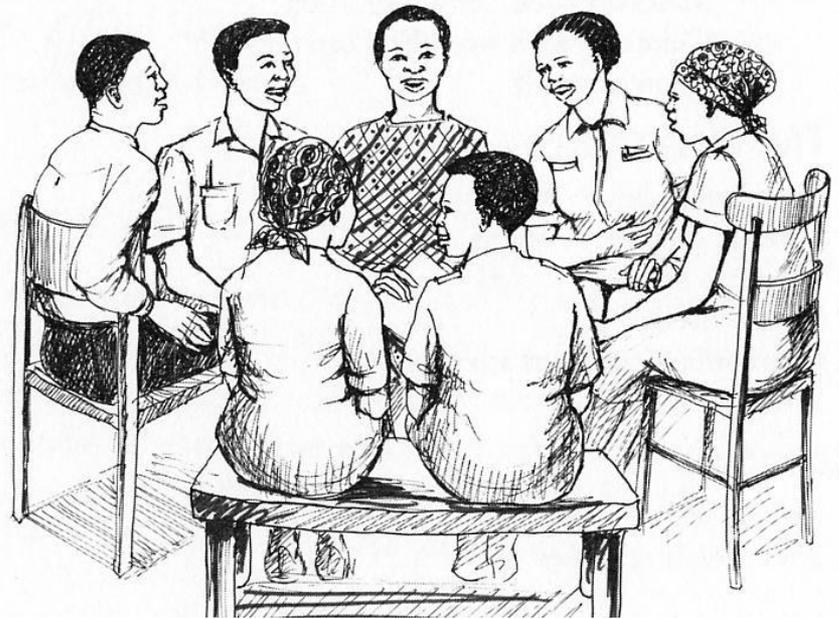
*How do we use **power** in our work?*
The Story of a grandmother



*Assessing how provider **used power**:* **Appropriate? Emotions? Effect?**

Discuss in groups:

- What did the provider do to show power, and why?
- How do you think the provider felt?
- What were the consequences of her action?
- **What would you have done in this situation as a nurse, and why?**



Discussion points

How the provider felt

- Anger/hurt – grand mother not appreciating

What the provider wanted to achieve

- To establish credibility: same power position as the grandmother
- Get the grand mother to listen, understand and cooperate

What enabled the provider to use the power in this way?

- Recognized own emotions – stepped back to set them aside
- Establish and focus on common goal – the child to get well

Using power automatically?

Discuss in groups:

- How would automatic use of power look like in the grandmother's story?
- *Please come and show it*
- What was the effect of automatic use of power, on the grandmother?



Why do we use power (automatically), and what happens to us?

In groups:

- *Share examples of how you have used power with patients and colleagues*
- What were reasons you used power?
- What did you do to show power automatically?
- How did you feel?
- What do you think was behind your need to use power?



Discussion points

➤ Reasons we use power automatically.

- Set her/himself above the other
- Undermine, punish
- Protect oneself from vulnerability

➤ How do we feel?

- Strong
- In charge

➤ What is behind the power?

- Insecurity
- Feeling hurt/disrespected



I don't feel
competent
handling this
patient/situation



Some background:

Use and abuse of power; reactions

- **Appropriate use of power:** Good leadership means – leaders know when and how to use power, with awareness and emotional competence, and when necessary
- **Inappropriate use:**
 - When someone feels personal values, ideas, status, power or authority is threatened;
 - Person reacts automatically (Often subconsciously – does not «know why»)
- **Aim:** (*often subconscious – to quieten/control the challenge*)
- **Feelings:** feel «small», guilty, ashamed, vulnerable, frustrated, «bad», incompetent
- **Your (common) reaction (automatic):**
 - Cover up (protect yourself) by e.g. anger, irritation, arrogance, withdrawal, «shutting down» .. Other??

Common ways of (mis)using power (also known as «domination techniques»)

- **Criticizing** you in front of others;
- **Criticizing** you regardless of what you do («can do nothing right»)
- **Ignoring** you, making you seem «invisible», not listening to you
- **Making fun** of you by using sarcasm, irony, or directly commenting on what you have done
- **Showing disrespect**, verbally or non-verbally
- **Keep back info**, keep you «in the dark»



Common ways of (mis)using power (2)

- **Inducing guilt and shame** – putting the blame on you for hurting others/make them feel bad
- **Steal your work** or ideas, presenting them as his own
- **Use of language** – terminology, technical language
- **Body language** – e.g. show disapproval
- **Put people up against each other**
- **Accuse others** of using power inappropriately
- **Using compliments** to manipulate you to do something



Let us put you in the power role..

- **You are**

- A senior colleague to a junior colleague, where the junior has made a mistake or

- A doctor/health provider to a patient who comes in with a child who is very sick (*and looks like he should have been brought in earlier...*)

- **Which choices do you have, re your role towards the other person?**

- ***NB in the following discussions, we use the first scenario – senior with junior colleague***

How do you practice your power role: **Automatic, or conscious?**

- *When junior colleague comes in, senior is in charge*
- *How do you use your power?*

1. Using your power automatically?

- **You: Adult/expert**
- **Junior/Colleague: «Child/ignorant»**



OR –

2. Focusing consciously on a common goal

- **You: Adult/communicator**
- **Junior/Colleague: Adult/partner**



Alternative 1: Automatic use of power usually causes Automatic reactions



- **Why does this happen?**
- *Reflect on action, effect and conclusion*
- 1. **Senior's ACTION:** She shouts at junior: ***You made a mistake!***
- **(Automatic) effect on junior:** Hurt? Scared? Angry?
- **Automatic conclusion:** «She is bad». «She wants to put me down»
- *Junior interprets senior's action automatically, because she is hurt:*
- *She **assumes** senior nurse has the intention to hurt you*
- *Could there be an alternative interpretation?*
- *And then an alternative way to respond to her shouting?*

Reflections on choice 1

- **Senior: Adult/expert Junior/C: «Child/ignorant»**
- ***What senior does: Puts junior "in her place"***
- **Focus:** Senior's need to **show power**, punish
- **Effect** on senior: **Feels powerful** (?covering what?)
- **Effect** on junior's emotions and behavior: feels judged; resentful, hurt. Covers it up by anger – shouting back
- **Effect on outcome** of the interaction? A conflict, where both are unaware of their emotions (vulnerability), and act automatically
- *The junior will not learn about her mistake, will not improve*
- *The senior will not understand reasons for junior's mistake, and cannot guide her to learn and improve.*
- ***The «shouting match» destroys cooperation and trust***



When my boss is mad and takes it out on me, I do less work. Can't reward bad behavior with a positive response.



Participants' example

- *“ One of the relatives came and said to me, please come and see my patient. I went very fast to see what was happening. When I reached there, I found the patient was vomiting. I went to inform the Clinical Officer, then I returned to the patient’s bedside with the C.O.*
- *On reaching there, the C.O asked the patient: “What is wrong?” The patient said “Abdomen!” The C.O asked the patient “What’s wrong with your abdomen! Even me I have an abdomen!”*
- *The patient could not answer him but rather she kept quiet.”*



But Now: Junior has been to the communication course, and uses EC

Senior's ACTION: Shouts: You made mistake!

- **Effect on junior:** Hurt.
- ***BUT: Recognizes senior's and her own emotions***
- ***She steps back, asks qs and analyzes reasons:***
 - Did senior nurse want to put me down?
 - Or was she overwhelmed/had a bad day/could not cope/was not aware.....
- **New conclusion:**
 - «Senior nurse (probably) had no intention to hurt me»
- ***Junior nurse does NOT step into the «victim role»***
- ***She is free to act constructively, and asks senior if they can talk a bit later (when tempers are down)***
- ***Junior uses emotional competence to respond to misuse of power***



Alternative 2: Senior nurse uses power with emotional competence

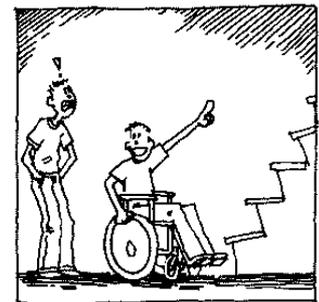


- **2. Senior's ACTION:** Feels anger, recognizes it, steps back consciously from an automatic reaction (to blame the junior)
- She sees the junior is afraid, and looks exhausted. She asks:
- **What happened? Why?** (*in a neutral voice, communicating intention to listen to reasons, and understand*)
- **Effect on junior:** Surprised, but grateful. Explains, opens up about difficult circumstances, and why she made a mistake.
- **Senior acknowledges, but does not judge.** She asks junior what she can do to avoid making such mistakes in the future.
- **Junior feels respected,** she takes responsibility for her action, and is free to reflect, ask and learn.
- **The collaboration is strengthened,** junior feels she has support from senior. This motivates her to work hard, and to continue to learn – with awareness, building emotional competence.



Effects of making conscious choice

- **Senior: Adult/communicator** **Junior: Adult/partner**
- *What you do: Establish respectful communication base*
- **Focus:** The goal – understanding and responding to junior's problem – without judging her for the mistake
- **Effect** on senior nurse: Professional pride, retain energy
- **Effect** on junior's emotions and behavior: **feels safe**, opens up, explains the circumstances, asks questions freely
- **Effect on outcome** of interaction: identify junior's problems; cooperation, trust, learning, motivation to change?
- The junior will remember, and is empowered



Example:

Response to automatic use of **power**?

- *“Supervisor using his position to undermine me i.e. asking me to do things which are not necessary (telling me to do things for him which he can do for himself)”*
- *“I comply especially if there are people around but later at a private place let him know that I dislike his behavior”*

Provider’s new response when faced with automatic use of power:

- **Used her awareness:**
- **Recognized her emotions –**
- **Stepped back**
- **Discussed later**



Skills: The space to step back

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Emotional Competence made simple

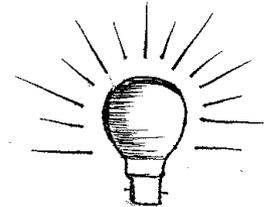
1. **Recognize** emotions
(yours; others')



2. **Think**



3. (Stop!) **Analyze** – WHY?



4. **Act** – with awareness
and understanding



Participant's example

- *“I feel I have become even more lenient, I respect people’s opinions more, I try understand their perspective, I take a step back but with time I’ve had to demand respect. With the recent clinical officers’ strike, the interns had been commanded by the medical superintendent office to cover weekends and had refused and were resilient. I tried taking a step back but they were not even trying to compromise on their situation. I had to lay it out straight the consequences to them for them to try and assist in the coverage during weekends as required.”*

Summary: Handling your power with emotional competence

- Behind the use of power: often **vulnerability**
- We may use power to **protect the vulnerability** – often **unconsciously**
- **Automatic use of power** can cause hurt, harm and incorrect diagnosis and treatment
- It also **demotivates**, and prevents action
- **Awareness of how power functions** enables us to choose how to use it **consciously** – with intention to get the job done
- Skills to use power well include: **Recognize and acknowledge the emotions, take a step back, analyze reasons and focus on the common goal**

