

Bringing Awareness to Power Differentials

Power is present in every relationship. In addition to the power dynamics in a reporting structure, we also need to be aware of the ways systems of oppression exert power. Bringing awareness to the power differential gives us the capacity to leverage our agency toward co-creating equity.

Low Power Differential

- You play *no role* in the other person's job status.
- You have *similar* professional histories and roles.
- You *share* most identity markers with the other person.

Medium Power Differential

- You are a trusted advisor, and people seek out your observations and judgment about the roles in the organization.
- You may have an informal leadership role and/or more expertise or success in general.
- You may not believe you have the power while others *perceive* you as having power.
- You share *some* identity markers with the other person, which means you experience privilege or marginalization that the other person does not.

High Power Differential

- You are the other person's manager, supervisor, or boss (OR you are supervised or managed by the other person).
- You play a role in the person's *evaluation* (OR they play a role in yours).
- Due to your identity markers, you *consistently* experience privileges or marginalization that the other person does not.

We all have a responsibility to co-create equity.



When you perceive you have more power than another person in the conversation	When you perceive you have less power than another person in the conversation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is your job to build trust and lead with vulnerability.● Be transparent about what you will do with the information that is shared.● Invest in the conversation using curiosity and deep listening.● Treat the person as unique and valued.● Share ideas and feedback with a future orientation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Be aware of the energy dynamic and give as much energy as you receive.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Lead with curiosity to break your assumptions.○ Don't default to waiting for the person with more power.● Communicate directly with the other individual, and not just through other people.● If you feel safe, share a new idea or perspective.● If you feel safe, challenge the person with a question or idea.