

Power, Privilege and Entitlement: Cross-currents of gender, race and money.

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2:00 – 2:30pm **Welcome, Opening Exercise and Overview**

Learning Objective: Participants will gain awareness about the role and impact of power, privilege and entitlement in our work as Collaborative Professionals. Participants will begin to increase insight into their own conscious and unconscious relationship and responses to differences in power.

Exercise: Demonstration (fishbowl) of a professionals-only Collaborative meeting with obvious (conscious) and not-so-obvious power differentials between the clients, and between the professionals, at play.

Set-Up Instructions: This is Collaborative divorce of Riley and Taylor. Collaborative professionals debrief a team meeting that just took place where the big issue was Riley's request for significant alimony for a significant period of time. Taylor has been the breadwinner during the marriage. Riley also worked, but did so at a non-profit. Riley earned little income but spear-headed a new program that helped recovering addicts find jobs. The program was incredibly successful, and Riley has obtained a lot of accolades for the work. But not much pay. Taylor has the ability to pay alimony, but doesn't feel it's fair given that Riley is the one who asked for the divorce. It's a ten-year marriage. They have one child, who is 6.

Insert script:

Riley's professional: My client certainly feels quite set on the notion of a decent amount of alimony for a fair amount of time. I suspect that Riley came off as pretty entitled during our meeting. At the same time, setting aside my client's personality, it seems reasonable that Taylor pay *some* alimony for some period of time so that Taylor and Riley have comparable standards of living until Riley can obtain a new position, at a comparable salary to Taylor.

Taylor's professional: Oh my god. I was shocked. Doesn't Riley have any self-respect. Do they really expect to be "taken care of" by Taylor? I would be embarrassed to be asking for alimony if I was in Riley's shoes. I just don't understand that way of thinking; or maybe it's a question of values, but I do *not* understand how anyone can find it reasonable or appropriate that Taylor essentially take care of the whole family. I really don't understand how Riley wouldn't *want* to be self-supporting, independent and contribute to the care for the child? What kind of parent is Riley anyway?

Process:

- What reactions are you having to this debrief?
- Are you aware of any feelings/thoughts about alimony that you may bring to the table before you even meet Riley and Taylor?

- Who here is imagining that Riley is female? Male? Not sure?
- Who here is imagining that Taylor is male? Female? Not sure?
- Imagine for a minute that Riley is female. Now shift and imagine that Riley is male and Taylor is female. What if they are same sex? [or non-binary?] Does that make the conversation about Riley's request/expectation for alimony feel different?

Introduction to the rest of the day:

- We are going to talk about moment when issues of power, privilege and entitlement are triggered.
- Moments of micro-aggressions: definition--daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, slights or dismissals--whether intentional or unintentional--that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial insults and denigrations toward any group.
- We are going to put moments of a micro-aggression under the microscope, and talk about what we do in these moments.
- And we will talk about what we wish we could do in these moments: we will craft a vision of how we would like to navigate these moments.
- First, we want to acknowledge that it is difficult in these moments—for all of us—to navigate these moments, directly and effectively, but also with grace.
- So, we first want to pause and ask you to consider for a minute, “What is standing in the way of navigating these moments in the way that wish we could (for me that is directly, and effectively, but with respect and with grace).” So what is standing in the way?
- Take a moment to think; write it down. Invite folks to share?

2:30 – 3:00 pm **Discussion of theory and research regarding power, privilege and entitlement**

Learning Objective: Participants will learn a general overview of the main social theories and perspectives on power, privilege and entitlement.

Powerpoint and didactic presentation.

- The presentation will include brief descriptions of some of the significant contributors to the field and will include voices from a variety of perspectives, including feminist social theory and critical race theory.
- Participants will also learn how power and privilege differentials work in the context of relationships and group settings.
- Discussion of bullying.
- Discussion of the interlocking nature of entitlement and dependency.
- Trainers will share diagrams (from Narrative Mediation at 109-110) depicting various relationships, some reflecting balance and equity, others reflecting power imbalances and social/relationship inequities.

- Discuss *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, by Peggy McIntosh. On Point 50, “I will feel welcomed and “normal” in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social.” Shout out regarding what happens when our clients do not feel “welcome” or “normal” in the process of getting divorced?

Question and answer period.

3:00-3:30 pm **Increasing Awareness of Power and Privilege**

Learning Objective: Participants will practice identifying differentials in power and privilege (in wealth, gender, race and personality) in interpersonal relationships and in collaborative settings.

Exercise: Series of fish-bowl demonstrations of interactions in a variety of settings designed to reveal the exercise of power, privilege and entitlement. The scenarios will show both obvious and subtle forms of power and privilege, as well as settings where multiple aspects of power and privilege operate simultaneously, in sometimes complicated and conflicting directions. Participants will review the demonstration, then be asked to share observations of power, privilege and entitlement in the vignettes.

Insert scripts.

- **Script #1: Cultural differences explaining desire for extended family to participate in parenting:**
 - African-American, female professional is meeting one-on-one with a white, female client: Client is discussing the argument she and her husband (whom she has noted earlier is from Mexico and has a large extended family who live locally) have been having prior to entering Collaborative process about custody and parenting time.
 - Client describes, with distress, the history of husband’s mother and sisters behaving intrusively since her child was born, and now, husband wants something in the custody agreement that will say whenever he travels for work, the child will stay with his extended family, rather than with the client, the child’s mother.
 - The professional listens attentively, and then makes a comment wondering about cultural differences, and the idea that husband’s culture may be influencing his feelings. Client appears miffed, and does not feel heard.
 - **Questions to process:**
 - Is there any aspect of the exchange that may reveal expectations, bias or stereotyping by the professional?
 - What possible threads of privilege, entitlement or bias might the client be experiencing?

- How might the professional respond next, when she realizes her client does not feel heard?
 - What factors may influence whether this interaction will go as well as possible or cause hurt or offense?
 - How might the professional act so as to ensure that the client, and the client’s husband, both feel “welcome” and “normal” throughout this process?
- **Script #2: Preference to “stay in own neighborhood.”**
 - White professional/white client: White professional discusses housing options for client that client might be able to afford.
 - Client expresses a distaste for a particular area of town that has a much more diverse population.
 - Client wants to “stay in her own neighborhood.”
 - **Questions to process:**
 - Client’s expression of white privilege?
 - Does this client feel welcome and “normal” to express her needs, desires and goals (without judgment)?
 - What if you happen to live that particular part of town, so that her expression of preference/privilege hits you personally? (As Kamala Harris said to Joe Biden: It’s personal. I was that girl.)
 - Do you say something?
 - If so, what do you say?
 - Thoughts on “what is standing in the way of responding in the way you wish you could?”

3:30-3:45 pm **Break**

3:45-4:00 pm **Professional’s role when facing power, privilege and entitlement in our work**

Learning Objective: Participants will gain understanding about choices to be made when facing exercises of power, privilege or entitlement. Learning will focus on using curiosity, respect, empathy and constant self-awareness, rather than a specific toolbox on technique. Learners will practice making choice in moments of power, privilege and entitlement.

Didactic/Interactive discussion (10-15 mins): Drill down into the “Essential” tools to be used when a client or professional expresses or uses power, privilege or entitlement. Define them and discuss what they look like in the context of facing power, privilege and entitlement. (PowerPoint with video snippets.)

- Curiosity. (Refer to Sharon Ellison’s work on Powerful Non-Defensive Communication)
- Respect.
- Empathy.
- Self-awareness

4:00 – 4:20 pm Exercise #1 (20 mins): Small group discussion, followed by full group process, of a team meeting in the face of a moment/micro-aggression.

Set up: Wife/mother is “hot pants”.

- Child specialist is debriefing with the coaches.
- Long term marriage; kids are in high school.
- Husband/dad has been the bread winner. Last year, Wife/Mom got a job with an international aid agency.
- Wife/mother ended up in an affair with someone she met at work, who is from Morocco.
- The affair helped Mom decide to divorce, although marriage had been difficult and unhappy for a long time.
- Child Specialist, speaking frankly to the coaches, says, among other things:
 - The kids are doing OK, all things considered. The truth is that “Lolita of Arabia” is not that bad of a mom.
 - I can’t imagine though, how Hot Pants is willing to just up and leave her kids for this job. What kind of mom does that?
 - By the way, did she show you her tattoo? I mean is she having a second adolescence or what?

Small group instructions:

1. Identify threads of power/privilege/entitlement.
 - What do you observe about the professional’s power to express her own bias?
 - Do you observe any gender power/imbalance?
 - What if the child specialist is male?
 - Do you observe any racial/ethnic power imbalance or microaggression?
 - Do you question whether the child specialist’s bias/comments would have been the same if 1) it was the Dad having the affair? 2) the paramour was Caucasian and from middle America?
 - Does anyone get hurt by this expression of bias/power imbalance when the clients are not present?
 - Even when clients are not present, do they feel “welcome” and “normal” to participate with honesty and transparency in this process?
2. Talk through what you might say in the face of this moment/micro-aggression?
 - How can you use the following skills to help address this moment?
 - Curiosity: What can you be curious about here? How do you express curiosity here?
 - Respect: Respect for who? How can you express respect here?
 - Empathy: What is being expressed under the sarcasm?
 - Self-Awareness: How am I affected? Triggered?

4:20-4:40 pm Exercise #2 (20 mins) (New small groups): Small group discussion, followed by full group process, of a team meeting in the face of a micro-aggression.

Set up: Working at Walmart.

- Clients are a White couple with one child, age 8, who are getting a divorce. They live in a suburb of a metropolitan area.
 - Wife is a fully-employed attorney; Husband is an Uber driver.
 - Husband has been underemployed and unemployed throughout the marriage. Wife has had it with taking care of Husband financially. Husband is educated; she cannot understand why he won't work.
 - In a team meeting, Husband is explaining that he needs support because he cannot earn a living.
 - Wife is very frustrated and shares that her mom sent her job listings showing that Walmart is hiring.
 - Husband is irked and spouts back, "I can't work at Walmart, I'm white."
 - Wife's attorney spouts back: "Well, sometimes you have to do what you have to do. I have another client who took a job at Whole Foods; she's white, even though none of her co-workers are. They have good benefits."
 -
1. Identify threads of power/privilege/entitlement.
 - Race privilege?
 - Gender power/imbalance?
 - Is this a micro-aggression?
 - Does it feel different if the entire team is white?
 - Does everyone in the room feel "welcome" and "normal" to participate with honesty and transparency in this process?
 2. Role play what you might say in the face of these comments?
 - Curiosity: What can you be curious about here? How do you express curiosity here?
 - Respect: Respect for who? How can you express respect here?
 - Empathy: What is being expressed under the sarcasm?
 - Self-Awareness: How am I affected? Triggered?
 - Do you have a duty to ignore what feels offensive to you personally for the sake of professional responsibility to your client/the matter?
 - Do you have a moral/other duty to speak up when something is said that offends or hurts you?
 - What if one team member is a person of color? Does your sense of duty shift? How so? Why?

4:40-4:55 Large group process:

- If you speak to this moment, what do you say? When do you say it? Who is present?
- How do you stay in a non-defensive stance while speaking up?
- How do you address the moment without triggering defensiveness in the Husband or your teammate (the Wife's attorney)?
- Why are difficult discussions so difficult? What gets in the way?
- Underlying expectations and hopes? Fears and feelings?
- The role of shame and defense mechanisms.
- How do we keep from being defensive and triggering other defensiveness?
- The duty as a professional versus moral duty.

4:55 – 5:00pm

Closing, Evaluations