

Mini-Course: POWER DIFFERENTIAL

CE Hours: 2

Reading:

**Pp. 23-34,
101-105,
242-247, summary**

**Addendum if you are
a body worker or
NCBTMB certificant**

Learning Goals:

- 1) To have a felt sense of the nature and impact of the power differential.
- 2) To be able to list the specific responsibilities that accompany a power differential role.
- 3) To state the values of the power differential in helping relationships.
- 4) To explain how non-ordinary states are effected by the power differential and how to adjust to prevent undue influence.
- 5) To discuss why the power paradox is important information for helping professionals.

In Summary

Definition of the Power Differential: The role difference between expert and client that results in a vulnerability on the part of the client.

There is an inherent power inequality whenever you take on a role that gives you authority over another, or creates a perceptions that you have that authority. Power roles include supervisor, healer, therapist, teacher, employer, doctor, lawyer, etc. The value of this differential for therapists is that it creates a safe, well-boundaried, professional context for growth and healing.

This power differential is both created and maintained by inherent factors such as the following: the person in practitioner role is in service to the other; sets and maintains the boundaries of time and setting; is paid a fee; encourages the other to be vulnerable and self-revealing; is recognized as having particular knowledge, training, and skill; can hire and fire; can offer criticism or information that carries a very strong weight; is responsible for making assessments; and carries 150% responsibility for resolution and repair of relationship difficulties. Lack of understanding of the power differential can lead caregivers to feel confused, hurt, and/or angry and upset when clients are responding to their power position rather than their personhood.

right use of power		misuse of power
in information, compassion	ORIGINATES	in ignorance, fear, subjugation, domination, greed
consciously	IS APPLIED	unconsciously
accountability, feedback, collaboration, resolution and repair	USES	poor or no accountability, feedback, repair, collaboration

<i>right use of power</i>		<i>misuse of power</i>
<i>increased skill, satisfaction, enhanced relationships</i>	RESULTS IN	<i>wounding, desire for revenge, disempowerment of those in care</i>

ADDENDUM

IF YOU ARE USING THIS COURSE TO MEET THE NCBTMB STANDARD V ETHICS REQUIREMENT

As you have already read in this course, the power differential is the foundation and the basis for the boundaries and responsibilities that are assigned to roles of authority and professional care-giving such as massage and bodywork. These boundaries and responsibilities are for the safety and protection of both client and caregiver. They create healthy and helpful relationships. Here is an extension of the chart on page 10 called Summary of Power Differential Role Differences. Note that one of the responsibilities that goes with being in right relationship is to demonstrate and assist your clients in becoming more empowered in their role as clients so that they can use the power differential relationship well rather than being passive or disempowered in it. This is a bigger process for some clients than for others and thus may require skill and patient persistence.

<i>Massage Therapist/Bodyworker Boundaries and Responsibilities</i>	<i>Behavior of Empowered Client</i>
<i>as much as possible, assist your clients in becoming more empowered in their role</i>	<i>is collaborative, curious, resourced, calm and centered, self-aware, open</i>
<i>recognize your personal limitations and practice only within these limitations</i>	<i>accepts limitations and if needed, a referral without feeling rejected</i>
<i>recognize and own your Influential (power differential) position with your clients and do not exploit the relationship for personal or other gain</i>	<i>honors and uses power differential for healing and support</i>
<i>recognize and limit the impact of transference and counter-transference between your client and you</i>	<i>understands that transferences are common and is willing to recognize and work with them</i>
<i>avoid dual or multidimensional relationships that could impair professional judgment or result in exploitation of your clients or employees and/or coworkers</i>	<i>recognizes and honors multiple role limitations and the harm they can cause</i>
<i>do not engage in any sexual activity with a client</i>	<i>does not seek sexual activity with caregiver</i>
<i>acknowledge and respect your client's freedom of choice in the therapeutic session</i>	<i>understands and owns own wisdom and choice</i>

<i>Massage Therapist/Bodyworker Boundaries and Responsibilities</i>	<i>Behavior of Empowered Client</i>
<i>respect your client's right to refuse the therapeutic session or any part of the therapeutic session</i>	<i>understands and owns right to choose to say no</i>
<i>refrain from practicing under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any illegal substances (with the exception of a prescribed dosage of prescription medication which does not impair the certificant)</i>	<i>does not come to session under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or illegal substances</i>
<i>have the right to refuse and/or terminate the service to a client who is abusive or under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any illegal substance</i>	<i>accepts caregiver's refusal of service</i>

Self-Study Practice:

Complete Self-Study Practice on pages 33-34.

Assessment Questions:

1. What new information or understanding did you get from the self-study experience?
2. Are there any ways in which you take refuge in or advantage of your power role?
3. Do you tend to over-use or under-use your role power?
4. What is the 150% equation?

Feedback

1. Please rate in terms of value: 1 (lowest) 5 (highest)

professional _____
personal _____
reading _____
self-study _____
questions _____

2. Please rate from 1 (lowest).....5 (highest)

What was the degree of ease, if needed, in communicating with me _____

What is the quality of reading materials (ie professional in appearance, accurate information, free of typos)_____

Was there adequate support for the content questions _____

Were the unit objectives supported by the home study materials _____

Were assignments carried out in a private and secure manner _____

Did the content lend itself to a home study format _____

3. How many hours/minutes did the following pieces take you?

reading _____

self-study _____

questions _____

4. Anything else you'd like to say?

5. Your Helping Profession _____

6. Organization Requiring CEUs _____

Continuing Education

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