



Gather Gender-Specific Information on the Current Situation

Activity 2.3: Examining Power Dynamics and Decision-Making

Objectives:

- Explore the role of power and decision-making in a relationship.
- Identify who has the power and decision-making around communication topics.
- Determine how power dynamics and decision-making may impact your current program design.

Preparation:

Review the **key concepts** and **background research** to be sure your team has a good understanding of **behavior change and gender** and is aware of the gender-related social and behavioral determinants.

Gather the following program documents to help you go through this activity:

- Current strategy or marketing plan
- Formative research results (if available)
- Monitoring and evaluation results (if available)
- Other programmatic documents
- Activity Template (see below)
- Relevant resources from the I-Kit

Be sure you have enough copies of any templates, handouts or resources needed for this activity. Consider printing the **Gender-Related Social and Behavioral Determinants Handout** from the step page to use as reference during the activity.

Expected Outcome:

Ranking of important communication topics in relationships and their influencers

Purpose:

The purpose of this activity is to guide you on how to organize a power and decision-making matrix that examines the gender-related social and behavioral determinants and the role of power within a relationship.

Introduction:

The social and behavior determinants of health have an impact on an individual's health. Power dynamics, roles within the household and community, women's and men's involvement in household decisions, and attitudes about sexual norms have been shown to have an impact on the health of an individual.

There are a number of ways power can operate within a society, and as a result affect the social and behavioral determinants. Invisible and hidden mechanisms of power shape the ability for men and women, boys and girls to participate in decisions and, as a result, their health and well-being. These mechanisms can lead to powerlessness, conflict, marginalization and resistance.

The different dimensions of power include:

A Power and Decisions Matrix will help you to use the information you have collected up to this point to identify and look at different communication topics, determine their level of importance, whether the topic is discussed and who may influence the decision-making process. It also helps to question who the decision may favor.

Instructions to complete this activity:

Exploring power dynamics and decision-making is important when trying to understand, address and integrate gender into your program. You can use the Power and Decisions Matrix to organize the data you already have, or adapt this activity to conduct in-depth interviews or focus groups with individuals.

Key Steps:

1. Ask the group to determine "who" you are trying to explore the

power dynamics and decision-making between. For family planning this may be a woman and her partner, or for sexual and reproductive health of youth, it may be the parents and their child. Insert these into the matrix template.

Communication Topic	Rank	Communication			Male Partner Influencers				Female Influencers				Decision Favors:	
	Perceived Importance	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes									Partner	Woman

2. Ask the group to think about the communication topics that would be relevant in these relationships. List these in the table provided. For example, communication topics for family planning between a woman and her partner may include:

- Aspirations for themselves and their family
- Number of children to have
- How their family size affects their aspirations
- Whether they want to delay or limit births
- If they want to have more children, when to get pregnant
- Use of modern family planning methods

Communication Topic	Rank	Communication			Male Partner Influencers				Female Influencers				Decision Favors:	
	Perceived Importance	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes									Partner	Woman
Number of Children														
Delay pregnancy														
Prevent pregnancy														
When to get pregnant														
Use of modern FP methods														

3. Ask the group to think about who may have influence over the decisions in this relationship. This may include their in-laws, peers or friends, the health worker, etc. List them in the table.

Communication Topic	Rank	Communication			Male Partner Influencers					Female Influencers				Decision Favors:	
	Perceived Importance	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Partner's Mother	Own Mother	Other Relatives	Friends/Peers	Health Care Worker	Partner's Mother	Own Mother	Other Relatives	Friends/Peers	Health Care Worker	Partner
Number of Children															
Delay pregnancy															
Prevent pregnancy															
When to get pregnant															
Use of modern FP methods															

4. Next, ask the group to go through each of the communication topics and, based on the evidence you have, determine the perceived level of importance. Ask whether communication and agreement exists between the two individuals (i.e., husband and wife, parents and children) around each of the topics.

Communication Topic	Rank	Communication		Male Partner Influencers					Female Influencers				Decision Favors:		
		Perceived Importance	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Partner's Mother	Own Mother	Other Relatives	Friends/Peers	Health Care Worker	Partner's Mother	Own Mother	Other Relatives	Friends/Peers	Health Care Worker	Partner
Number of Children	3	S	S												
Delay pregnancy	4														
Prevent pregnancy	1														
When to get pregnant	5														
Use of modern FP methods	2														

5. For each of the influencers, place a checkmark (✓) in all the boxes that refer to those who advise or have influence over the thoughts of the individual. Place an (X) in the box of the person who has the MOST influence. Once you have determined who has the most influence, discuss who the decision favors. Place a checkmark in the box.

Communication Topic	Rank	Communication		Male Partner Influencers					Female Influencers				Decision Favors:		
		Perceived Importance	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Partner's Mother	Own Mother	Other Relatives	Friends/Peers	Health Care Worker	Partner's Mother	Own Mother	Other Relatives	Friends/Peers	Health Care Worker	Partner
Number of Children	3	S	S			✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	
Delay pregnancy	4														
Prevent pregnancy	1														
When to get pregnant	5														
Use of modern FP methods	2														

Communication Topic	Rank	Communication		Male Partner Influencers					Female Influencers				Decision Favors:		
		Perceived Importance	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Partner's Mother	Own Mother	Other Relatives	Friends/Peers	Health Care Worker	Partner's Mother	Own Mother	Other Relatives	Friends/Peers	Health Care Worker	Partner
Number of Children	3	S	S	X		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	
Delay pregnancy	4														
Prevent pregnancy	1														
When to get pregnant	5														
Use of modern FP methods	2														

6. Finally, looking at all the individuals, place a star (✱) in the box of whoever made the final decision on the communication topic. If it is a joint decision, place a star in multiple boxes.

Communication Topic	Rank	Communication		Male Partner Influencers					Female Influencers				Decision Favors:		
		Perceived Importance	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Discussed? Yes/No/Sometimes	Partner's Mother	Own Mother	Other Relatives	Friends/Peers	Health Care Worker	Partner's Mother	Own Mother	Other Relatives	Friends/Peers	Health Care Worker	Partner
Number of Children	3	S	S	X		✓	✓			✓		✓		✓✱	
Delay pregnancy	4														
Prevent pregnancy	1														
When to get pregnant	5														
Use of modern FP methods	2														

This activity was adapted using the following resources:

VeneKlasen, Lisa and Miller, Valerie. Dynamics of Power, Inclusion and Exclusion, Nonprofit Online News Journal: Just Associates, 2006.

Kumoji, E.K. HCC Pakistan Communication Power Matrix_v1_24 February 2015. Unpublished.

