

Empowering Relationships: *Adolescents, Power, and Relationships*

Overview:

Power exists in relationships of all kinds—friends, family, church/parish, business, etc. It is through naming and understanding these power dynamics that we can name abuses of power and how relationships may become abusive. This workshop is designed to help adolescents understand how power dynamics can affect relationships in both supportive and abusive ways from Catholic theological roots in human dignity and right relationships. The creation of this workshop was sponsored by the *Taking Responsibilities* grant from Fordham University.

Goal:

The goal of this workshop is for participants to reflect critically on relationships and power dynamics so that they will be more equipped to understand their role and autonomy in healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Objectives:

At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Name 1 way power dynamics can influence relationships.
- Identify 2-3 factors that impact their autonomy in their relationships.
- Correctly identify 1 behavior that contributes to cycles of abuse.
- Name 1 way to correct an abusive power imbalance in a relationship.
- Participate in an Ignatian prayer experience that invites them to reflect on where God is present in their relationships.

Materials:

- Relationship cards (icebreaker activity, Appendix A)
- Wheel of Power & Control Handout (Appendix B)
- Projector/public media display
- Scenarios handout (Appendix C)
- Slide deck (Appendix F)
- Parent handout (Appendix G)
- Examen Material
- Pamphlet (Appendix D)
- Evaluations (Appendix E)
- Masking tape, markers, construction paper

Audience:

Teens/Adolescents in youth groups (grades 9-12)

Outline:

- Introductions (10 mins)
- Icebreaker (20 mins)
- Relationships & Power (40 mins)
 - Relationship Discussion (10 mins)
 - Guided Qs with pair (8-10 mins)
 - Discussion of Guided Qs (20 mins)
- BREAK (20 mins)
- Wheel of Power and Control (60 mins)
 - Discuss Wheel (10 mins)
 - Scenarios Activity (40-50 mins)
- Examen (10-15 mins)
- Wrap up/Closure (15 mins)
 - Handout Pamphlet/Evals (Paper) (5 mins)

Procedure:

(Be sure to have the appropriate number of the appendices printed for learners present.
Display slide 1)

Introductions (10 mins)

- Thank everyone for being here.
- Briefly introduce instructors (insert optional instructor intro slide).
- Outline the day (slide 2).
- Cover group environment/group agreement content (slide 3) to cultivate expectations.
- Introduce Icebreaker (slide 4).

Ice Breaker (20 mins)

- While distributing the name tags for the icebreaker, explain the **Pairing Opposite** game: finding the second half of your relationship pair—the two terms that go together.
- Students will receive a title or type of person that goes with another name in the room. Describe to them *“You can’t read the name, but have other people describe it to you without saying what the name tag says. Then find your pair, and introduce yourself to your pair. We will then come back together as a large group.”*
- This can optionally be done with masking tape, securing student name tags to their back, or students may hold them up without looking at them.
Supplies: masking tape, construction paper name tags (Appendix A, printed out), markers
- After everyone has found their pair, go around the room introducing their pair and each other to the class.

Relationships & Power (40 mins)

- Discuss what relationships are (slide 5):
- What is a relationship?
 - Possible answers include: *2 people talking, 2 people who know each other, people who interact together...*
- Say “*Good answers. A relationship can be between any two people because PEOPLE are relational beings. Whenever there are 2 or more people, there is a relationship. What are the names of some relationships? What kinds of relationships can people have?*”
 - Possible answers include: *friends, family, mother/daughter, father/son, boss/employee, business relationships, strangers?*
 - Affirm the answers people give when they name types of relationships.
 - Affirm that there are many different types of relationships. “*...And that’s what we are going to talk about today!*”
- Give learners directions “*Talk with your partner to discuss the components of that relationship—what does it look like?*”
 - Give example: “*If someone has Patient and the pair has Doctor, I would say that our relationship involves me going to them when I’m sick, getting check ups, and just being well, overall. And that pair’s role in our relationship is to make sure I am well and listen to my health concerns.*”
 - Allow learners 3-4 mins to find their pair, and give their answers to the group.
- Give directions “*now turn to your partner to discuss—in that relationship, these 2 questions: (1) Who has more power in that relationship? And (2) Where does this power come from?*” (display slide 6).
 - Allow learners 3-5 minutes to discuss this and return to the group for larger discussion.
 - Discuss this as a group, identifying the sources of power and who has power in what ways. Be sure to identify the words **Autonomy** and **Abuse** in this process.
 - **Discuss how this relates to the Catholic faith:**
- Say “*We will discuss abuse of power in relationships when we come back from a break—and our autonomy and what we can do about that.*”

Faith Connections:

The second creation story tells us that humans are in relationship with each other, all creation, and God (Genesis 2:4). Wherever there are two or more people gathered in God's name, God is there (Matthew 18:20).

Solidarity is something that can guide our relationships and we can cultivate in our relationships. Pope John Paul II saw solidarity as a “firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.” (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 38). Our hope for any relationship is one where each person's autonomy is respected as well as the needs of the other person. If we are not respecting the needs of the other, we risk abusing them.

BREAK (20 mins) (display slide 7)

Wheel of Power & Control (60 mins)

- Call the group back from the break. Reintroduce the group to the content “*Welcome back everyone—we talked about what relationships are, the different types, and how people have power in those relationships. Now we will take a look at what happens when people abuse power in relationships...*”
- Begin the Discussion of Abuse (display slide 8):
 - Ask the group “*What are some examples of people abusing power in a relationship?*”
 - Possible answers include: *a partner beating another partner, someone breaking belongings, a doctor giving bad medical information, police beating a person who has surrendered...*
 - Affirm these answers, or flesh out responses to name specific behaviors.
 - Ask “*How do we know this is an abuse of power?--what clues us in to it being a not good thing?*”
 - Possible answers include *someone is getting hurt, it doesn't feel good, other people have told us it's bad...*
- Discuss the Wheel of Power and Control (display slide 9):
 - Say “*From studying relationships, we get this handy tool called the Wheel of Power and Control. Who has heard of this before?*”
 - Display the wheel on the projector and Handout the Wheel of Power & Control handout.
 - Briefly describe each section, engaging learners in comprehension (slides 10, 11, 12).
Supplies: Wheel of Power and Control (Appendix B)
 - Depending on timing, this might be a good time for a break (slide 13).
- Describe **Scenarios** activity (display slide 14):
 - If you took a break, return from the break, reintroducing everyone to the content.
 - Say “*What we are going to do in the next part of today will be looking at a couple different scenarios. In each of these scenes, talk through the question/prompts with your partners for a couple minutes and we will talk more about it in the large group.*”
 - Distribute scenarios from the **Scenarios Handout (Appendix C)**, giving 1 scenario to each group.
- Do small group scenarios activity
 - Reiterate instructions: “*Review the scenario you have and discuss these in your small groups. We will then talk about them together in the large group.*”
 - Instruct the groups “*Now get into your groups and discuss the displayed questions. Do this for 6-8 mins and we will return to the large group for a discussion.*”
 - Give groups 6-8 mins to discuss scenarios.
 - **GUIDING QUESTIONS** (display slide 15):
 - Who has power in this relationship?

- What kind(s) of power do they have?
- How is the power being used or abused?
- Are there areas of the *Wheel of Power and Control* fits here? How so?
- After returning to the large group, go through the scenarios and discuss each group's answers to the questions. Have each group read their scenario for the class, then discuss how they answered the questions.
- After each group has gone, pose the following questions to the large group:
 - *How can someone exercise autonomy to interrupt in this situation?*
 - *How could this scenario get worse?*
- FACILITATION NOTES
 - This activity may take more or less time depending on learner engagement. Consider alternative methods of grouping students (more students per group, only conducting 3 scenarios), or remove scenarios as you see fit for sensitivities based on a group's social dynamic.
 - Processing scenario 2 has a high chance of students using victim blaming language to describe the situation. We recommend facilitators familiarize themselves with this concept and ways to navigate discussions in which this language is used to minimize harm to others. Should this happen, draw the inquiry back to the conversation of power and how abuses of power may influence someone's reactions. Be sure to focus on power interplaying in the relationship.

Faith Connections:

Jesus taught us to use our power to help others, like when he raised Lazarus from the dead (Jn 11:1-45). This is how he showed his solidarity with others. We have power that we can use to help others. We can also misuse this power to hurt others.

*Two principles of Catholic Social Teaching are the inherent dignity of each person and human rights. All persons have inherent dignity because they are made in the image and likeness of God, and so deserve to be treated as such. To abuse someone is to deny their dignity as **imago dei** and disregard their individual sacred rights.*

- Wrap up:
 - Thank everyone for their time with this. Conclusion thoughts...
 - Let participants know we will now move on to a prayer/reflection time. Display slide 16.

Examen (10-15 mins)

Rationale:

The Examen of St. Ignatius of Loyola is an adaptable prayer. This adaption includes these theological assumptions: God loves us more than we can imagine, regardless of who we are/ what we have done/

who we love/ what we believe/ our race or culture/ whatever else might divide us; that God longs for a personal relationship with us; acknowledging to that relationship changes us, and, in doing so, changes our world; there are patterns in our lives of moving closer or further from this God that come up in the Examen. The Examen gives people time to talk with God about the presentation, including hard moments.

- Say: *“As we end our time together today, we will end with an Examen prayer. As you might know already, an Examen is a prayer of review of the day. An Examen looks at those high moments and low moments, those times when we were feeling close to God or far away, moments of gratitude and moments that are hard. It was one of St. Ignatius of Loyola’s favorite ways to pray. Today we will do an Examen on your time in the workshop. Don’t worry about us instructors - this is just for you and God, the God who loves us more than we can ever imagine. Any questions? (take questions)*
- *Let’s begin our Examen.* (Depending on needs of group, choose one of these options: walking quietly alone; sitting and journaling quietly with the questions; guided using the script below.
- *As we start, please get comfortable.*
- *Now that you are comfortable, take a few, deep breaths, all the way down to your feet. Let the tension of the day drain from your body, back into the earth.*
- *Now, I invite you to imagine you are somewhere you love very much, maybe a favorite vacation spot, maybe your room at home. Take a few moments and imagine it in all its details. (pause 5 seconds)*
- *As you are imagining this place that you love very much, imagine someone you love very much walking into the room, Jesus, who loves you more than you can imagine. Take a few moments now and imagine being with Jesus in this favorite place. Give thanks as you are with him. (pause 5 seconds)*
- *Now, talk with Jesus about your time in this workshop, like you are talking with an old friend. Tell him about what we covered, about relationships and different types of relationships, about solidarity and caring about other people, about power, and about different ways power can be abused in relationships. We talked about different examples where power is abused in relationships, and we talked about how we are called to love all people, those who are abused as well as those who abuse (Add or subtract topics as appropriate). (pause 10-15 seconds).*
- *As you are talking with Jesus, notice what you are grateful for. Tell him about it. How does he respond? (pause 5 seconds)*
- *As you continue talking with Jesus, is there anything you are not grateful for? If so, tell him about it. What does he do? (pause 5 seconds)*
- *Take a few moments and talk about whatever else you want him to know. Notice how he responds to you.*
- *Your conversation with Jesus begins to draw to a close. Thank him and say goodbye. Then, draw your attention back to this room. When you are ready, open your eyes.*

Wrap up/Closure (15 mins)

- Gather participants in a circle, popcorn style or going around the circle, discuss:
 - “*Something I learned today/will take with me/have gratitude for...*”
 - Allow everyone to go once.
- If you have pamphlets prepared about local resources pertaining to abuse, pass them out here. (Example pamphlet in **Appendix D**)
- Thank everyone for coming. Explain that you want to know what worked or didn't, and how they felt about the workshop. Give them the Evaluations (printed out **Appendix E**) and clear instructions about what to do with it when they are done.

Appendix A

List of Relationship Pairs

Priest

Parishioner

(person who belongs to a parish)

Teacher

Student

Doctor

Patient

Pilot

Passenger

Parent

Child

Grandparent

Grandchild

Best Friend

Best Friend

Date to the Dance

Date to the Dance

Coach

Tennis Player

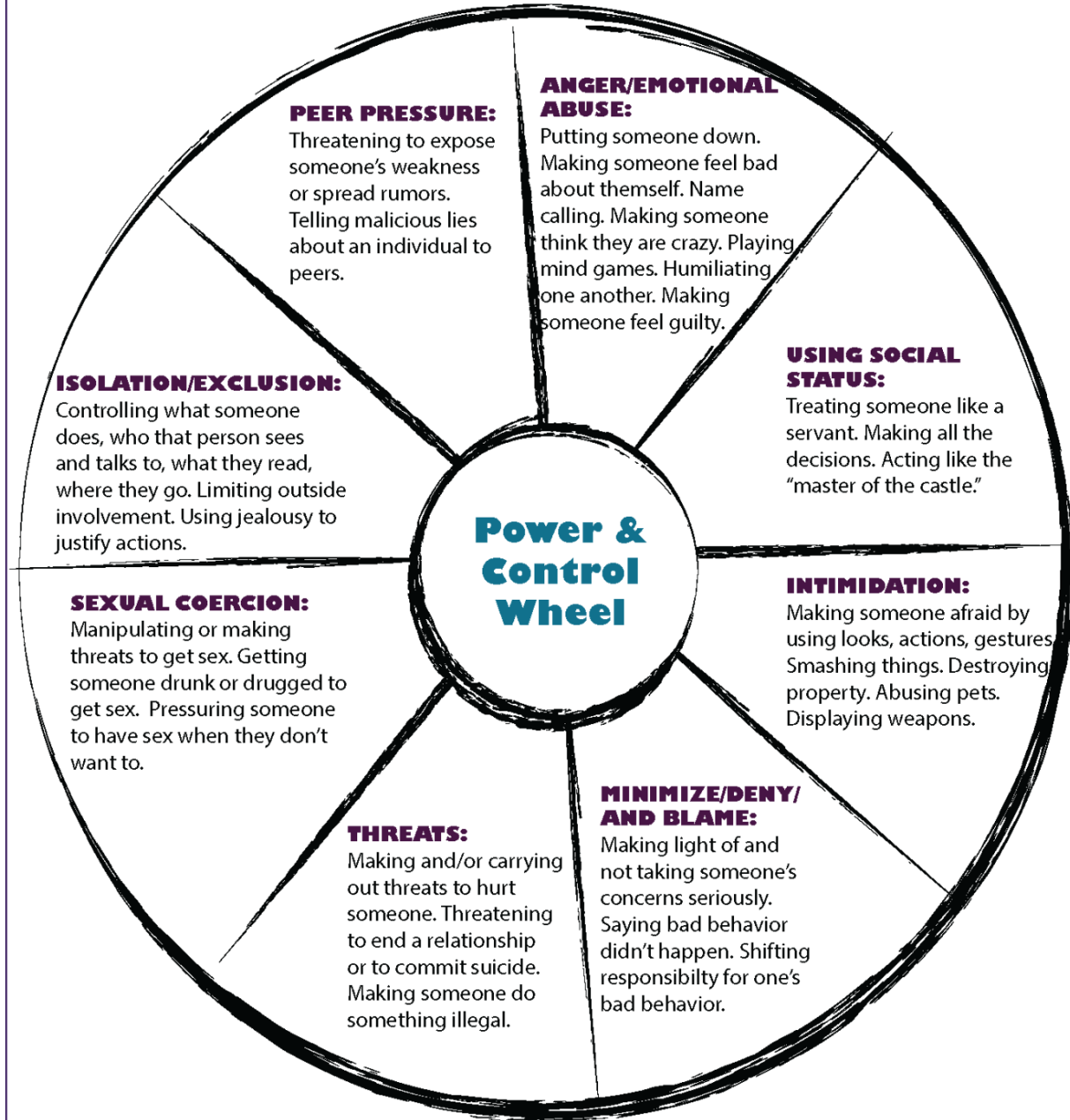
Youth Minister

Youth Group Member

Appendix B

Wheel of Power and Control Handout

Power & Control Wheel



Defining Unhealthy Relationships

Adapted from: <https://www.healthtyxyouth.org/uploads/files/resources/Healthy-Relationships-Toolkit.pdf>

A slightly different version of this wheel and a different educational activity with this resource can be found at: <https://www.healthtyxyouth.org/uploads/files/resources/Healthy-Relationships-Toolkit.pdf>

Appendix C

Scenarios

1. **Snapchat** - Two teenagers, Sam and Taylor, have been flirting for a few weeks through Snapchat but haven't ever spoken in person about it. Sam notices that Taylor ignores them in the hallways and at the youth group, even though they have been snapping with each other more. One day, Taylor asks Sam to send them a nude selfie. Sam becomes nervous since they have never sent nude selfies before and isn't quite sure if they feel comfortable with it. Sam tells Taylor that they aren't sure if they want to, and Taylor stops snapping with Sam. Sam finally sends Taylor a nude selfie in the hopes that they will resume their flirtatious relationship.

2. **Dating/Sexual Behavior** - A couple are out on a date at the movies and one person asks their date if they want to make out. The date says no, and they continue their time at the movies. After the movie ends, they get to the car where they ask again if their date wants to make out. Their date is flattered, but says no. This happens a couple more times throughout the night. The date still likes this person, but is not sure if they want to make out. Eventually, by the end of the night, they are asked to make out again and don't resist.

3. **Coach** - Coach T has been coaching Quinn for over three years and is a close family friend. Lately, Coach T has been asking Quinn to go get ice cream sundaes at the local diner after practice. Quinn gladly accepts this invitation at first. As school starts to pick up, Quinn becomes overwhelmed by all the homework that isn't getting done due to the ice cream treats. Quinn tries to decline the invitations, but Coach T insists that the visits are necessary to help them become team captain one day. Quinn's parents are good friends with the coach. Saying no to Coach T could make things awkward. Quinn also wants to make team captain next year and is willing to go for ice cream even when they would rather go home.

4. **Relationship** - Alex recently changed schools and is trying to make new friends at their new school (which is a rival school). It's been hard for Alex to feel included in a new friend group and is feeling torn between only hanging with old friends on the weekends and trying to make new ones. One day, Alex's best friend told them to avoid people at the new school and warned Alex that they wouldn't want to be friends anymore if they started being friends with certain people. Alex doesn't know what to do— Alex feels lonely during the school days, but wants to be loyal to their best friend.

Appendix D

Example Pamphlet of Local Resources

Ignatian Spirituality

Ignatian Prayer Resources:

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/>

Creighton University Online Ministries:

<https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.html>

Pray as You Go (daily Ignatian prayer):

<https://pray-as-you-go.org/>

Ignatian podcasts:

<https://www.jesuit.ie/podcasts/>

Places for Retreat

Jesuit Retreat House, Oshkosh, WI:

<https://jesuitretreathouse.org/>

Bellarmino Jesuit Retreat House,

Barrington, IL: <https://jesuitretreat.org/>

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me.

Within your wounds conceal me.

Do not permit me to be parted from you.

From the evil foe protect me.

At the hour of my death call me.

And bid me come to you,

to praise you with all your saints

for ever and ever.

Amen.

Marquette University's Grant

This project supports research designed to produce public facing resources for lay empowerment in the face of the clergy sexual abuse crisis. Funding provided by Fordham University's Taking Responsibility Initiative: Jesuit Educational Institutions Confront the Causes and Legacy of Clergy Sexual Abuse.



**Empowering
Adolescents:
Resources**



Healthy Relationships

We have relationships with all kinds of people: family, friends, sometimes romantic partners, and other important people in our lives (including ourselves).

Relationships can be healthy, unhealthy, or abusive. In healthy relationships, we love and support each other, listening to needs and doing our best to be there for one another. Unhealthy relationships can cause feelings of anxiety, hurt, or shame.

Abusive relationships involve the abuse of power to make exploit, manipulate, or harm those in the relationship. Recognizing power dynamics in relationships can help us know when we are being loved, when a relationship is unhealthy, and when we are causing or experiencing abuse.

Milwaukee Resources for Teens

Pathfinders. Daytime shelter and other services: 414-271-1560.

<https://www.pathfindersmke.org/>

COA Youth and Family Center. Services for people of all ages. Multiple locations: 414-267-1365. <https://www.coa-yfc.org/>

Walker's Point. For youth experiencing a crisis, including running away and housing. 414-647-8200.

<https://walkerspoint.org/>

Wrap Around Milwaukee. Multiple services for people under 18: 414-257-7607. <https://wraparoundmke.com/>



Concerned that someone is being abused?

For Emergencies: 911

To report child abuse in Milwaukee County: 414-220-SAFE (7233), option 4

If someone is suicidal or in a mental health crisis: Child Mobile Crisis Team. 414-257-7621 (24/7)

If someone has been sexually assaulted: Healing Center:
Call: 414-219-5555.
Text: 414-219-1551 (24/7).
<https://www.aurorahealthcare.org/healing-advocacy-services/>

If someone is abused by a Catholic priest, bishop, or other Catholic church leader:
Stephanie Delmore, Victim Assistance & Employee Support Coordinator. 414-769-3332. delmores@archmil.org.

Appendix E

Sample Evaluation

EVALUATION

Best Practices for Lay Empowerment:
Empowering Adolescents in the Catholic Church

Date

Workshop Location:

Grade:

Age:

Before this workshop, did you think about power in relationships? Circle one. Yes No

I learned a lot in this workshop about power in relationships:

5

4

3

2

1

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

The presenters were knowledgeable about power in relationships:

5

4

3

2

1

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

The information I learned will help me identify how power is used in relationships:

5

4

3

2

1

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

What is SOMETHING you learned that is NEW?

What is SOMETHING you want to KNOW MORE ABOUT?

Is there anything else you want the presenters to know? Use the back if you need to.

Appendix F

Slide Deck

Empowering Relationships: Adolescents, Power, and Relationships

Sponsored by Marquette University and Fordham University's Taking
Responsibility Project

Outline of the Day:

- **Introductions**
- **Pairing Activity**
- **Relationships & Power**
- **BREAK**
- **Unhealthy Relationship Habits**
- **Spiritual Exercise**
- **Wrap up**

Group Environment

- **Open mindedness**
- **Assume good will**
- **The language that we have**
- **Honor others' experiences**
- **Take care of yourself**

“Find your Pair”

Let's get to know each other!

Relationships

- **What *IS* a relationship?**
- **What kinds of relationships can people have?**

When you've found your pair...

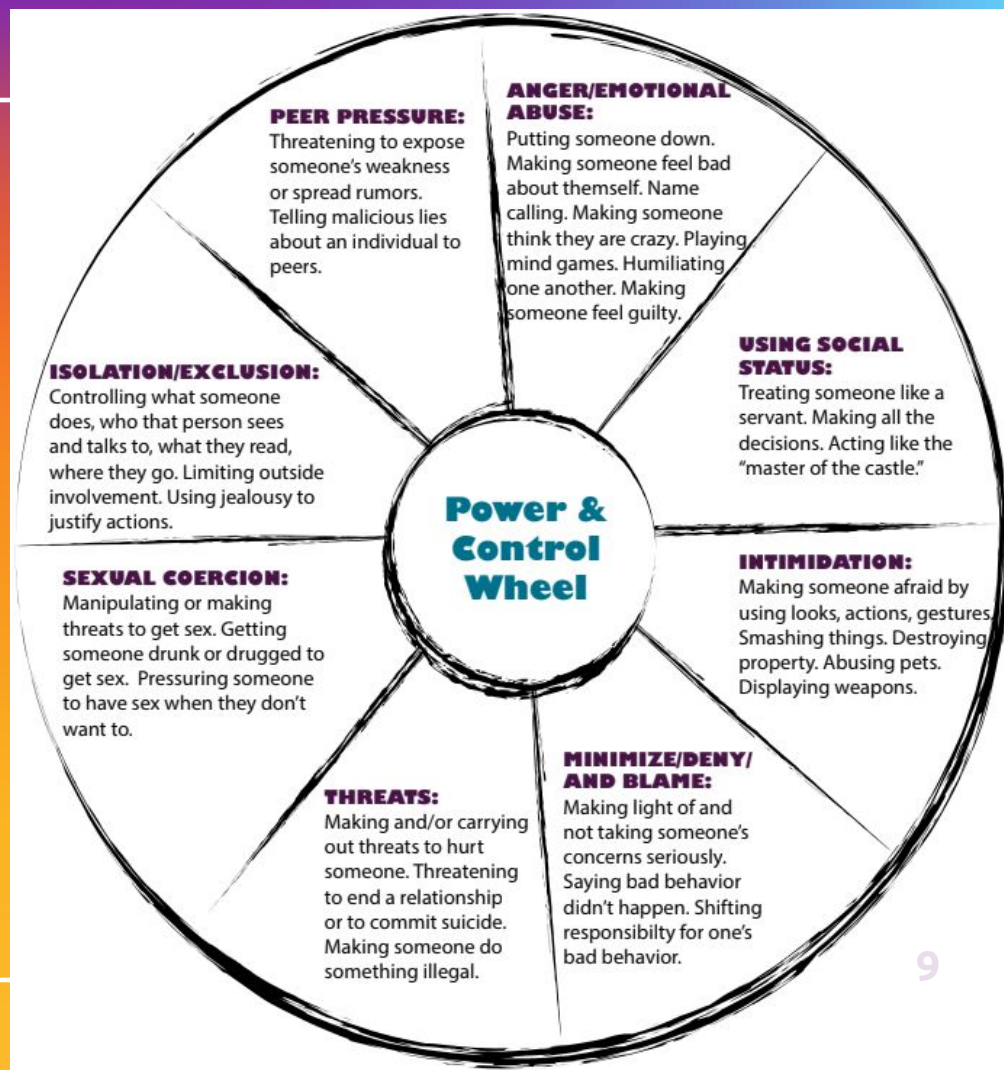
1. Who has more *POWER* in that relationship?
2. Where does this power *COME FROM*?

BREAK - 5 mins

Power Abuse in Relationships

1. Some **EXAMPLES** of people abusing power in relationships?
2. How do we **KNOW** this is an abuse of power?

Wheel of Power & Control





**ANGER/EMOTIONAL
ABUSE:**

Putting someone down.
Making someone feel bad
about themselves. Name
calling. Making someone
think they are crazy. Playing
mind games. Humiliating
one another. Making
someone feel guilty.

**USING SOCIAL
STATUS:**

Treating someone like a
servant. Making all the
decisions. Acting like the
"master of the castle."

**Power &
Control**

justify actions.

Power & Control Wheel

SEXUAL COERCION:

Manipulating or making threats to get sex. Getting someone drunk or drugged to get sex. Pressuring someone to have sex when they don't want to.

THREATS:

Making and/or carrying out threats to hurt someone. Threatening to end a relationship or to commit suicide. Making someone do something illegal.

MINIMIZE/DENY/ AND BLAME:

Making light of and not taking someone's concerns seriously. Saying bad behavior didn't happen. Shifting responsibility for one's bad behavior.

INTIMIDATION:

Making someone afraid by using looks, actions, gestures. Smashing things. Destroying property. Abusing pets. Displaying weapons.



ISOLATION/EXCLUSION:

Controlling what someone does, who that person sees and talks to, what they read, where they go. Limiting outside involvement. Using jealousy to justify actions.

PEER PRESSURE:

Threatening to expose someone's weakness or spread rumors. Telling malicious lies about an individual to peers.

ANGER/EMOTIONAL ABUSE:

Putting someone down. Making someone feel bad about themselves. Name calling. Making someone think they are crazy. Playing mind games. Humiliating one another. Making someone feel guilty.

USING SOCIAL STATUS:

Treating someone like a servant. Making all the decisions. Acting like the "master of the castle."

**Power &
Control**

BREAK - 10-15 mins

Scenarios

Scenario Questions

1. Who has power in this relationship?
2. What kind(s) of power do they have?
3. How is the power being used or abused?
4. Areas on the *Wheel of Power & Control* fit here? How so?

Examen

Thanks!

- Pamphlet/Handouts
- Evaluations

Have a great week!

Appendix G

Handout for Parents

Empowering Relationships: *Adolescents, Power, and Relationships*

Hello, parents and guardians of teens enrolled in our workshop, *Empowering Relationships*. This handout is designed to give you an idea of what your teens will be discussing/learning.

Below is the information about the lesson including the overview, goal, and objectives from the workshop. Your teen will be engaging in discussion and interactive learning activities about how power dynamics exist between two people. This covers relationships of all kinds—friend, familial, business, romantic—and how we might identify and address harmful power dynamics.

This workshop has been created by Marquette University as part of a larger project funded by Fordham University's [*Taking Responsibility Initiative: Jesuit Educational Institutions Confront the Causes and Legacy of Clergy Sexual Abuse*](#). This project supports research about the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic church.

Overview:

Power exists in relationships of all kinds—friends, family, church/parish, business, etc. Through naming and understanding these power dynamics, we can name abuses of power and how relationships may become abusive. This workshop is designed to help adolescents understand how power dynamics can affect relationships in both supportive and abusive ways from Catholic theological roots in human dignity and right relationships. The creation of this workshop was sponsored by the *Taking Responsibilities* grant from Fordham University.

Goal:

The goal of this workshop is for participants to reflect critically on relationships and power dynamics so that they will be more equipped to understand their role and autonomy in healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Objectives:

At the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Name 1 way power dynamics can influence relationships.
- Identify 2-3 factors that impact their autonomy in their relationships.
- Correctly identify 1 behavior that contributes to cycles of abuse.
- Name 1 way to correct an abusive power imbalance in a relationship.
- Participate in an Ignatian prayer experience that invites them to reflect on where God is present in their relationships.

Overview of Presentation:

- Introductions and Icebreaker: *Activities to get to know each other.*
- Relationships and Power: *Examining the variety of relationships that exist in one's life.*
- Wheel of Power and Control: *Examining a tool used to identify unhealthy behaviors in relationships.*
- Examples of Relationships and Power: *Discussing scenarios of power and abuse of power in relationships.*
- Examen on the Presentation: *Spiritual reflection on the material from the day.*

While some of the material is driven by student inquiry, the instructors will be offering prepared material and scenarios of power dynamics between people in a variety of positions (i.e., peer/peer, coach/athlete, etc.) from a theological lens. There will be a break for food and spiritual reflection near the end of the event.