

Forum Power Plays

Preventing sexual harassment in workplaces of care

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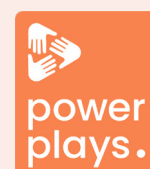
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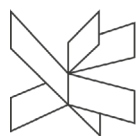
FORUM

POWER PLAYS

Preventing sexual harassment
in workplaces of care



This manual is a result of the project Power Plays – preventing sexual harassment through memory work & forum theater in workplaces of care. Power Plays was funded by Nordic research initiative on sexual harassment in the workplace from 2022-2023. Project partners was Roskilde University (Denmark), VIA University College (Denmark), Oulu University (Finland) and Jämställd Utveckling Skåne (Sweden).



VIA University
College



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Introducing the workshop



What is Forum Power Plays?

Forum Power Plays is inspired by the forum theatre method, developed by the Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal (1931 – 2009) and later developed by Birgitte Woge Nielsen and the Power Plays research team. The adapted Forum Power Plays method uses a participatory drama technique to engage workplace participants to confront workplace sexist harassment. With this method, Forum Power Plays participants get the opportunity individually as well as collectively to analyze and reflect upon re-played situations of workplace sexist harassment. Based on collective analysis, the participants (actors and spect-actors) are invited to find and try out different solutions to the conflict of sexist harassment in the situations played.

What is the purpose of the Forum Power Plays?

The purpose of a Forum Power Plays workshop is to develop the workplace participants' sexist harassment literacy. I.e., to engender more nuanced understandings of the power dynamics at play in workplace situations of sexist harassment. The purpose is also to empower the workplace participants to counteract workplace situations of sexist harassment by giving them the opportunity to enact solutions and change the outcome of the sexist harassment scenarios in a safe setting.

The first part of the workshop revolves around the forum play. During the play the participants:

- Gain a bodily and emotional experience of the power dynamics in situations of sexism and sexual harassment
- Get the opportunity to reflect on and discuss the power dynamics in situations of sexism and sexual harassment
- Get the opportunity to resolve and/or change the asymmetrical power dynamics in situation of sexism and sexual harassment. Depending on how sustainable the offered solution is, the spect-actors* will be able to see the conflict unfold with a positive change

The second part of the workshop focuses on the future and how we can create a working environment which prevents sexual harassment from happening.

* *Spect-actor is a combination of the words spectator and actor. The audience engages with the performance as both spectators and actors with the power to stop and change the performance.*

Step-by-step guide to start



1.

Contact management and ask them to clear the schedule for this workshop.

2.

Find contact persons for support structures in your workplace. It could be a work environment representative, HR-representative or the occupational health care. Be prepared to refer to them if needed by any Forum Power Plays participant.

3.

Book two rooms that can ensure a safe space of confidentiality.

4.

Inform your workplace about the workshop:

- a. What is Forum Power Plays and what is the purpose of the Forum Power Plays?
- b. The support structures that will be activated if they feel distressed during or after the workshop.

5.

Participant selection criteria: In this workshop, every staff member is welcome to participate, including managers. Participation is voluntary. All the selected participants need to participate in some way, no observers are allowed. No preparations are needed of the participants.

Preparation



Time

It is possible to conduct Part 1 without conducting Part 2.

Part 1: 2 HOURS
Forum Power Plays

Long break 30 MIN

Part 2: 1 HOUR
Power Plays Prevention talk

TOTAL: 3,5 HOURS
Including breaks

Joker:

1



Participants:

6-10



Recommended amount. Maximum 14.

Supplies

- Something to keep time
- Marker batons in two different colors
- Three big papers
- Fruits/cake/sandwiches or lunch to be provided during breaks
- Printed versions of:
 - Appendix 1: Warm up exercises
 - Appendix 2: The joker
 - Appendix 3: The Power Plays definition of sexist harassment
 - Appendix 4: Criteria of inclusion/exclusion
 - Appendix 5. Selection of ideas and action-plan

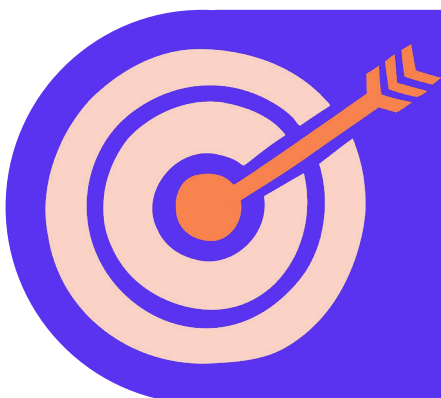
No need to use computer or other electronic devices.

Setting

A room with big enough space to be able to move around a lot, without visual or audio insight. A table with seating places for all participants. A second room near the main room, also without visual or audio insight.

Intensity

Fun but might also be emotionally intense for participants.



Outcome

- Embodied understandings of power dynamics in situations of workplace sexist harassment
- Rehearsed strategies for handling sexist harassment in workplace situations
- An action plan on how to prevent sexist harassment in the workplace (*Part 2: Prevention Talk*)

Preparations for the Joker

Here you can find plays to use for the Power Forum Plays. Pick two to three plays that you think are most relevant for your workplace. You can also adjust the plays if you want.



The role of the Joker is to facilitate the process of the forum play session. The Joker does not need specific skills or knowledge related to sexist harassment to facilitate this workshop. Consider who is best suited to be the Joker in your workplace. It is important that the Joker understands the role, is comfortable in being the joker and are able to make people feel safe in the group. Be well prepared by reading the manual carefully.

The main purpose of the Joker is to facilitate the plays

Listen – don't talk (all the time)

Challenge – don't argue/judge

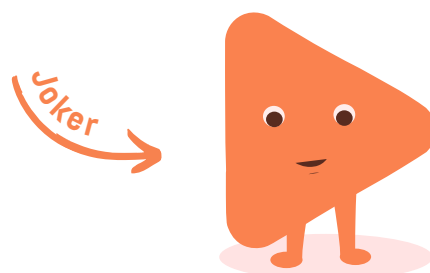
Ask simple questions, it's okay with a "no" or a "yes"

Lead process, not content

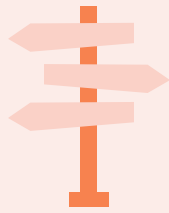
Support – don't overrule verbally or non-verbally

Let go and trust the group

Summarize – don't preach



Joker guidelines



Tell the participants that you will guide the process and take care of the timing.

Make the participants feel safe. Keep track of feelings in the room and remind participants that they can take a break if needed.

Be prepared that this topic can evoke emotions. All emotions are welcome. Do not value or interpret the emotions. Let them be there.

More information about the Joker in Appendix 2.

**HOW DID YOU FEEL
IN THE SITUATION?**

Manual part 1:

Forum Power Plays

Phase

Check in

15 min

Activity with instructions

1. Round of presentation by name and position

2. The Joker explains the objective of the workshop

Acting on sexist harassments situations that should not occur

3. The Joker presents the workshop program (incl. breaks)

4. The Joker establishes the ground rules and make sure that everyone understands them

- Mutual confidentiality: what happens during the workshop stays in this room. Make sure that everyone feels safe to share their thoughts and ideas.
- Trust the process. You do not need any prior knowledge to be able to contribute to the forum plays. Though things may seem confusing at first, you will understand what we will be doing as we go, so just follow the process, and take one step at a time.
- Trust each other and that you want each other well.
- Say: "yes and...!", by that we mean that instead of saying no to your colleagues' suggestions, say: "yes! And then we can also do this or this..." There is room to try out different scenarios and there is no right or wrong.

! APPENDIX 1

Warm up

20 min

First warm up:

Crazy ways of walking (warm up the muscles and the joints – see each other doing crazy movements)

Second warm up:

Follow the hand (cooperation, responsiveness)

Third warm up:

Nonverbal sculpture (expressing feelings)

Inform the participants

How to play the situation and preparation of the plays.

25 min

APPENDIX 3

Definition brainstorm dialouge

The Joker:

- Splits the participants into two groups of two or three.
- Explains the rules of dramatization:
 1. Understand and agree on the conflict
 2. Enlarge the climax and make it crystal clear
 3. Set the setting and make the characters. Who are they, how do they behave verbally and non-verbally? What are their emotions? Are they standing close to each other, or far away? How do they move and what emotions do they express?
 4. Don't talk too much before you start playing – just try!

Each group dramatizes and prepares the situation to be played in plenum. The Joker walks around and provide feedback to the two groups. Could they do anything differently to emphasize the climax, or the feelings involved in the play?

If you have more than six participants:

While the chosen actors prepare and rehearse the two forum play situations, the remaining participants brainstorm on their understandings and definitions of sexist harassment.

1. Let the participants fill in 5 words they associate with sexist harassment on a large poster.
2. Introduce the participants to the Power Plays definition of sexist harassment.
3. Let the participants compare their understanding of sexist harassment to the Power Plays definition:
 - How does this definition of sexist harassment relate to their understanding/experience of sexist harassment?
 - a) What is the same?
 - b) What is different?
 - What surprises you in this definition of sexist harassment?
 - What can we learn from the Power Plays definition?
 - What does this definition of sexist harassment entail for your workplace?



BREAK – 10 MIN

Short information

How to play the play.

5 min

APPENDIX 2

Play 1

20 min

The Joker gives a short introduction to the Forum Power Plays and the three different roles:

- The actors play out the situation
- The rest of the group are spect-actors (spectator + actor). They are active spectators and reflect upon and discuss the situation and suggest alternative actions to solve the conflict. The spect-actors can also volunteer to join the stage and play out the alternative actions by replacing the oppressed person, the aggressor/oppressor, or a bystander.
- The Joker facilitates the process by asking questions to elicit reflections and solutions.

The joker:

- Introduces the play, its context, and the actors in the play
- Says go! – the play starts
- During the play the Joker can ask for a time out and use the “thinking hat” (by placing a hand above the specific actor’s head) to explore what a certain actor is feeling, thinking when acting the way he/she/they does
- Stops the play at the peak of the conflict
- Gives the audience a few seconds to absorb the play

The Joker facilitates the reflection, discussion, and alternative actions:

- Asks the spect-actors analytical questions, for example:
 - Do you feel sorry for X, Y or Z?
 - What do you feel by watching the play?
 - Are you familiar with the situation?
 - What would you do if you were X?
 - At what point would you change the story?
 - Is there any way to change Y’s behavior?
 - Could Z have done anything different?
 - Is the solution realistic?
- Reminds everyone that the solutions should be realistic and that we at this point only can change what is going on at the stage, what is happening here and now
- Encourages the spect-actors to take a role in the play and play out the suggested action/solution.
- When an action/solution is played, the Joker thanks the spect-actors and actors for their reactions and invites other solutions.

The play continues until a realistic and sustainable solution emerges. There can be several realistic solutions and sometimes you cannot find a sustainable solution and the session ends with a debate.

Play 2

20 min

Repeat the same process with the second group.

Check out

10 min

The Joker asks the participants to consider:

- Their biggest surprises during the workshop
- The most important take-aways from the workshop

The Joker reminds the participants of the support structures at the workplace if they need someone to talk to after the workshop.



BREAK – 30 MIN

Manual part 2:

- Power Plays Prevention Talk

Manual part 2:

Power Plays

Prevention Talk

Phase

Prevention talk

How to change the future and prevent SH situations from occurring

5 min

Activity with instructions



Purpose:

Turn to the future and explore ways of preventing sexism and sexist harassment in the workplace.

The facilitator introduces the Preventive talk workshop

We now turn to the future with the objective to explore ways of preventing sexist harassment situations from occurring in your workplace. We will do that by four exercises:

- Prevention brainstorm relay
- Evaluation of ideas
- Selection of ideas
- Make an action-plan

Prevention brainstorm relay

5 min



Purpose:

To energize the group and give all participants the opportunity to contribute to the pool of preventive actions and to get as many ideas as possible.

Instructions:

The participants are divided into two groups, placed in two different corners of the room. At the other end of the room, two blank posters are placed. Each group gets a marker (red and blue) – one person at the time runs to the poster and write their idea.

The groups are given 5 minutes to exhaust their shared pool of ideas on how to prevent situations of sexist harassment from occurring in their workplace.

APPENDIX 4

Evaluation of ideas

15 min



Purpose:
to make the participants aware of what counts as preventive actions and not.

Instructions:

- The facilitator introduces criteria of inclusion/exclusion:
 - The idea must be preventive, and not reactive
 - The idea must be realistic to pursue in a near future
 - The idea must address the workplace culture
 - The idea must have impact beyond the singular situation
- The facilitator hands out the printed appendix and asks the participants to evaluate their own ideas based on the criteria.

APPENDIX 5

Selection of ideas and make an action-plan

25 min



Purpose:
To create local ownership to the ideas and write an action-plan.

Instructions:

- Decide what idea(s) you want to be implemented at your workplace.
- Make an action-plan for the idea(s) and write it down on a paper. Use the following questions to guide your discussion:
 - Who do you need to talk to, to make the idea happen? (i.e., the site manager, HR, the union representative)
 - Who will be responsible for the specific idea?
 - When will you start planning or implementing the idea? Tomorrow or next Tuesday?
 - In 3 to 6 months, who will be responsible to go through the action plan and evaluate what has been done, what should be improved etc?

Check out

10 min

The Joker asks the participants to consider:

- Their biggest surprises during the workshop
- The most important take-aways from the workshop

Appendix 1:

Warm-up exercises

Purpose:

The purpose of the warm-up exercises is to help the participants to loosen up before the play. The warmup is necessary for the forum theatre to succeed, it is a crucial step and cannot be skipped.



First warm-up: Crazy ways of walking

Warms up the muscles and joints – see each other doing crazy movements.

1. Ask the group to move around the room, loosely swinging their arms and gently relaxing their heads and necks.
2. Start walking around in a circle and ask the participants to join in and to follow your movements.
3. Change the way you walk, for example by:
 - Walking fast and then slow and then fast again.
 - Walking forwards and backwards
 - Walking like an old person
 - Taking really big steps
 - Imitating a dog etc.
4. Ask a participant to decide how the group should walk next, follow their lead, and then ask the participant to pass it to someone else.
5. Continue until every participant have led the group at least once and the group are warm and energized.



Second warm-up: Follow the hand

Cooperation, responsiveness

1. Tell the group that they will be split up in pairs where one will lead, and one will follow.
2. Ask for a volunteer
3. Place your hand 5 centimeters from the participants face and ask him/her/they to follow your hand movements, and that the follower's face never should be more than five centimeters from the leaders hand.
4. Walk around the room and make movements with your hand.
5. When everyone have understood the task, ask them to pair up with one leader and one follower and start the exercise.
6. After a minute or two, ask them to change roles and repeat the exercise.

Third warm-up: Nonverbal sculpture

Expressing feelings

1. Ask everyone in the group to think about a feeling (sad, stressed, relaxed, happy etc).
2. Ask one of the participants to sculpture out the feeling he/she/they had in mind on the other participants without saying anything. The participant should form the sculptures only by touching the other participants. They can also show with their face how they want the sculptures to grimace. This happens in silence.
3. When the first participant is ready with forming the sculptures, you ask everyone to guess what feeling they are supposed to represent.
4. Repeat so that everyone gets the change to form sculptures of the others.

Appendix 2: The Joker

As the Joker you should make sure that the participants feel safe. Keep track of feelings in the room and remind participants that they can take a break if needed. Be prepared that this topic can evoke emotions. All emotions are welcome. Do not value or interpret the emotions. Let them be there.



The main purpose of the Joker is to facilitate the plays

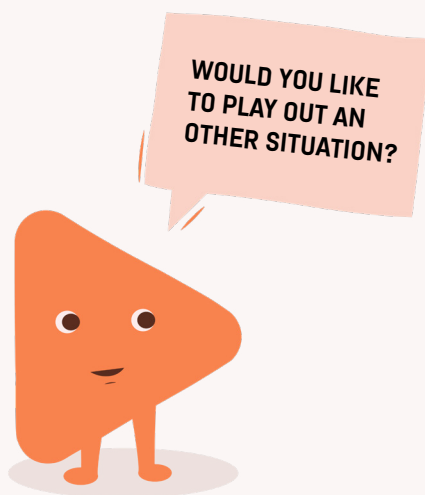
- Listen – don't talk (all the time)
- Ask simple questions, it's okay with a "no" or a "yes"
- Support – don't overrule verbally or non-verbally
- Summarize – don't preach
- Challenge – don't argue/judge
- Lead process, not content
- Let go and trust the group



During the play:

- Introduce the play, its context, and the actors in the play
- Say go! – the play starts
- During the play you can ask for a time out and use the “thinking hat” (by placing a hand above the specific actor’s head) to explore what a certain actor is feeling, thinking when acting the way he/she/they does
- Stop the play at the peak of the conflict
- Give the audience a few seconds to absorb the play
- Asks the spect-actors analytical questions, for example:
 - Do you feel sorry for X, Y or Z?
 - What do you feel by watching the play?
 - Are you familiar with the situation?
 - What would you do if you were X?

- At what point would you change the story?
- Is there any way to change Y 's behavior?
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- Is the solution realistic?
- Reminds everyone that the solutions should be realistic and that we at this point only can change what is going on at the stage, what is happening here and now
- Encourages the spect-actors to take a role in the play and play out the suggested action/ solution.
- When an action/solution is played, the Joker thanks the spect-actors and actors for their reactions and invites other solutions.
- The play continues until a realistic and sustainable solution emerges. There can be several realistic solutions and sometimes you cannot find a sustainable solution and the session ends with a debate.



Appendix 3: The Power Plays definition of sexual harassment

Any act, visual representation, speech or writing or behavior and practice that demeans, offends, or creates hostility to a person because of their gender or sexuality

- *which includes unwanted sexual attention or sexual violence*
- *with the purpose or consequence that the person's dignity or rights are violated/exceeded with physical, sexual, psychological, or socio-economic damage/suffering as a result*
- *and which create a toxic work environment and/or reproduce gender stereotypes*

(freely adapted from Einersen et al. 2021).

Compare your understanding of sexist harassment to the Power Plays definition:

- How does this definition of sexist harassment relate to their understanding/experience of sexist harassment?
 - What is the same?
 - What is different?
- What surprises you in this definition of sexist harassment?
- What can we learn from the Power Plays definition?
- What does this definition of sexist harassment entail for your workplace?



HOW DID YOU
FEEL IN THE
SITUATION?



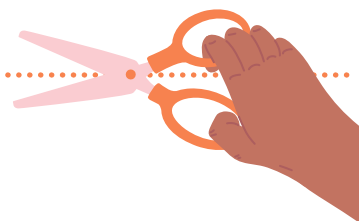
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The idea must be preventive, and not reactive

The idea must be realistic to pursue in a near future

The idea must address the workplace culture

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The idea must have impact beyond the singular situation

Appendix 5: Selection of ideas and action-plan

- Decide what idea(s) you want to be implemented at your workplace.
- Make an action-plan for the idea(s) and write it down on a paper.
- Who do you need to talk to, to make the idea happen? (i.e., the site manager, HR, the union representative)
- Who will be responsible for the specific idea?
- When will you start planning or implementing the idea? Tomorrow or next Tuesday?
- In 3 to 6 months, who will be responsible to go through the action plan and evaluate what has been done, what should be improved etc.?





THIS SOUNDS LIKE AN GOOD IDEA!

I DON'T THINK THAT IS A PREVENTATIVE MEASURE THOUGH?

IDEA ONE
IDEA TWO
IDEA THREE