

SESSION 2.1

Understanding Power
Imbalances
(2 hours)



SASA! Awareness 2.1 – Understanding Power Imbalances¹

(2 hours)



Objectives

- Stimulate participants' focus on awareness.
- Introduce the concept of power in relation to raising awareness.
- Create an immediate experience of one group having power over another.
- Highlight similarities between this simulation exercise and life in our communities.
- Demonstrate how men's power over women is the root cause of violence against women.

Competencies

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the cause of VAW and relate it to “power over”. (*Note: This competency is further explored in SASA! Awareness 2.2 – Why Power Imbalance Exists and Awareness 2.3 – Connecting Power, Violence and HIV/AIDS.*)
- Explain why poverty, alcohol, and other contributing factors are NOT the root cause of VAW.



¹ These modules are found in *SASA! An Activist Kit for Preventing Violence against Women and HIV (2009)*. Kampala: Raising Voices. SASA! is downloadable at www.raisingvoices.org

A. Awareness Wordplay

(10 minutes)



Preparations

- Tape together 2 flipcharts and hang on the wall.
- Hang an additional single sheet of flipchart on the wall.

Steps

1. Introduce “Session 2.1 — Understanding Power Over”:

Welcome to the SASA! Training. This session is part of the Awareness phase of SASA!

SASA! is about inspiring a positive change in our communities. For individuals and communities to change they must first understand why change is important. This session explores how we can raise awareness about power, violence against women and HIV/AIDS.”

2. Write the word “awareness” in the middle of the flipchart paper.
3. Ask participants to think of words or expressions that mean “awareness.” (Contributions could include: recognition, grasp, understanding, knowledge, insight, appreciation, etc.)



4. Write all the words on the flipchart, around the word “awareness.” Keep this process at the pace of a fast brainstorm.
5. Explain: *“To address issues of violence against women and HIV/AIDS in our communities, we must constantly expand our awareness of these issues, and all that defines and influences them. The Awareness phase of SASA! focuses on raising the awareness of activists and community members about the imbalance of power between women and men, and how it causes violence against women and increases women’s vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.”*



B. The New Planet (60 minutes)

Preparations

- Photocopy and cut out the “**New Planet Rights and Life Cards**” provided at the end of these instructions, so that there are 30 of each Rights Card and 15 of each Life Card.
- Prepare 30 pieces of tape.
- Hang a blank flipchart on the wall.

Facilitator’s Notes

- This exercise can become quite noisy! If you have a whistle, bell or pot to clang it might be useful for getting participants’ attention.





Steps

1. Explain to participants: *“In this exercise we will all become citizens of a New Planet. On this planet we do one thing all the time—greet each other! We also listen to and seriously follow the laws of the land.”*
2. Explain: *“Participants will walk around the room and introduce themselves by name to everyone, one by one. Every time you meet someone for a second or third time, you should provide new information about yourself (e.g., where you live, if you have children, etc). For all greetings you should use your real identities.”*
3. Ask participants to stand and to begin moving around and greeting each other.
4. While they are doing so, put out the four piles of Rights Cards.
5. After **2 minutes** of participants introducing themselves, call *“stop!”* Get participants’ undivided attention and ensure participants remain standing.
6. Explain: *“On this New Planet there are special laws and the people on this planet do whatever the laws say. I will now read the first of three laws on the new planet.”*



Law Number One

“Welcome to all noble citizens of our New Planet! You are a planet of happy, friendly people, always eager to meet someone new, always ready to tell them something about yourself. As citizens of this planet, you each have a right to four things:

* First, you have a right to **physical safety**, which protects you from being physically hurt. You will each get this card that represents your right to physical safety. (Show the card for “physical safety” to the group.)

* Second, you have a right to **respect from others**, which protects you from people treating you unkindly or discriminating against you. You will each get this card that represents your right to respect from others. (Show the card for “respect from others” to the group.)

* Third, you have a right to the **opportunity to make your own decisions**, which protects you from people who prevent you from having money or property or access to information. You will each get this card that represents your right to the opportunity to make your own decisions. (Show the card for “opportunity to make your own decisions” to the group.)

* Fourth, you have a right to **control over your sexuality**, which protects you from people forcing you into marriage, sex, commercial sex work, or any type of unwanted sexual activity. You will each get this card that represents your right to control over your sexuality. (Show the card for “control over your sexuality” to the group.)

Please come and collect your cards and continue greeting each other.”

7. While participants continue greeting each other lay out the two piles of Life Cards next to the pieces of tape prepared.
8. After **3 minutes**, call “stop” and gather participant’s undivided attention.
9. Explain that it is time to read the second law.

Law Number Two

“To all noble citizens of our New Planet, the whole population of our planet will now be divided into two parts. Half of you will now become “squares,” and the other half will become “circles.” You will each pick a card representing one of these groups; it is called your Life Card. You must have a Life Card to survive on this New Planet. Please collect a card and tape it on your chest. Then, continue greeting each other.”

10. After **3 minutes**, stop the participants and read the final law.

Law Number Three

“To all noble citizens of our New Planet, times have changed. We now officially declare that circles have more power than squares. If I clap my hands (ring bell/blow whistle) while a circle and a square are greeting each other, the circle can take one of the square’s four rights. If the square has no more rights, the circle can take the square’s Life Card. If a square loses his or her Life Card he or she must stand frozen in place for the rest of the game. Even though squares know of this risk, they must continue greeting circles. Please continue greeting each other.”

11. Periodically clap your hands (ring bell/blow whistle). Once a third of the participants are standing frozen, end the game by yelling “stop!” and explaining that the new civilization will now be put on hold in order for discussion.

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12. Have the group sit in the large circle.
 13. Discuss the experience of living on the New Planet using the following questions:
 - a. *“How did you feel when you received your four rights?”*
 - b. *“How did you feel when you were divided into circles and squares?”*
 - c. *“Squares, how did you feel when the circles were given more power?
How did you feel being at risk of having your rights taken away at any time?
How did it affect your behavior?”*
 - d. *“Circles, what was it like to have the most power?”*
 14. Draw comparisons between the New Planet and life in our community according to the following:
 - a. Ask participants:
 - i. *“Does every human have a right to these same four things?”*
 - ii. *“How is our community divided into different ‘categories’ of people?”* (Make sure “female and male” are among the responses.)
 - iii. *“What happens when society gives one group more power than another?”*
 - iv. *“When society gives some people more power, is this fair or just?”*
 - v. *“Who is usually given more power in our community?”*
 - vi. *“Do some people use this power to disregard the rights of others?”*
 - vii. *How do imbalances of power between women and men limit women’s lives in the world (i.e., their choices and movement in society)?*
 - b. Explain: *“When there is an imbalance of power between a woman and a man, in SASA!, we say that the man is using his **power over** the woman. This power imbalance exists because community members are unaware, accept it or are just silent about it. For this situation to change, we will need to begin that change ourselves.”*
 - c. Explain that in this room we all respect each other’s rights. Ask participants to return to the New Planet once more, greeting each other and redistributing the rights cards until everyone has one of each.

New Planet: Rights Cards

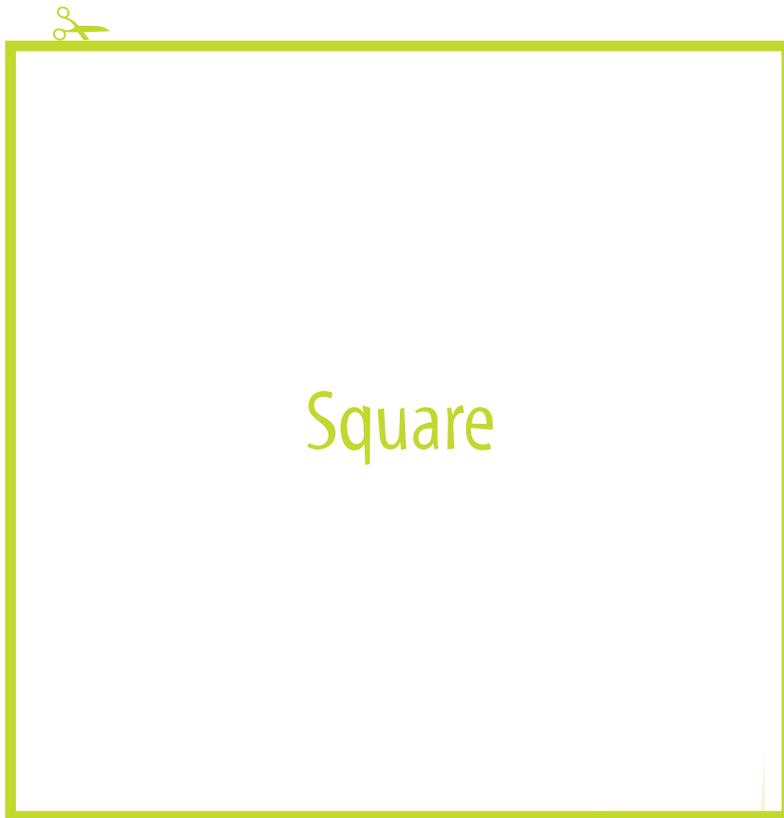
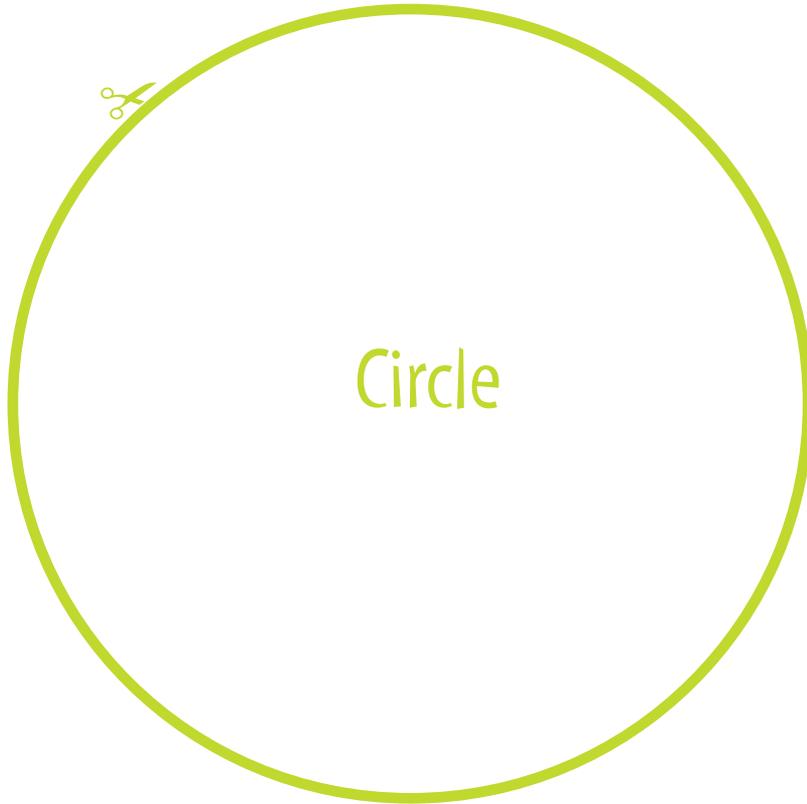
 **Respect
from others** 

 **Physical safety** 

**Control over
your sexuality**

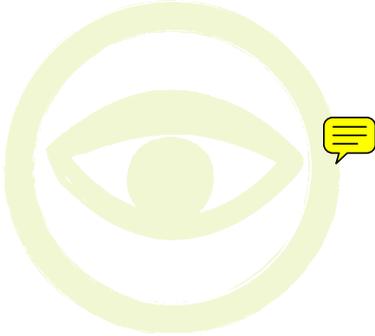
**Opportunity to
make your own
decisions**

New Planet: Life Cards





C. Root Cause (50 minutes)



Preparations

- Hang three blank sheets of flipchart on the wall.



Steps

1. Explain to participants: *“Based on our experience on the New Planet, we see that in our community there is a power imbalance between women and men. In this session we will link that power imbalance with violence against women.”*
2. Prepare to speak slowly and give participants the opportunity to consider your explanations and questions.
3. Explain: *“On the New Planet, the last declaration gave circles power over squares. If this power imbalance had not existed, then circles would never have been allowed to take away the squares’ rights and Life Cards. Therefore, this power imbalance was the cause of squares’ suffering. Our community often gives men power over women, just like the declaration giving circles power over squares.”*
4. Ask participants: *“Given what we experienced on the New Planet, does this mean that the society letting men have power over women is the cause of violence against women?”*

Before collecting responses, continue by asking: *“That is, if the power imbalance between women and men did not exist, would violence against women as a problem in our communities cease to exist as well?”* Collect a variety of responses, without agreeing or disagreeing with participants. Just ask people what they think. Do not record their responses.

5. Explain: *“Unlike the New Planet, our community has many other things that also seem related to violence against women, for example:*

*alcohol abuse
poverty
unemployment
cultural practices
religion*

Write these on the first sheet of flipchart, leaving room at the top for a title.

6. Explain: *"We will now do an exercise to explore how all these issues are related to one another."*
7. Ask participants to divide into five groups, by counting off from one to five, and then grouping themselves by number.
8. Explain: *"Each group will be given a topic. Each group will have **5 minutes** to determine why their topic is **NOT** a cause of violence against women, and why the power imbalance between women and men **IS** the cause of violence against women. After **5 minutes** each group will be given exactly **1 minute** to present their reasons to everyone else."*
9. Write on the second sheet of flipchart: *"Why is our topic NOT a cause of violence against women, and why IS the power imbalance between women and men the cause of violence against women."*
10. Give each group one of the topics listed on the first flipchart (alcohol abuse, poverty, unemployment, cultural practices and religion).
11. Conduct the exercise. Alert the group when **1 minute** remains. When **5 minutes** have passed call *"stop!"*
12. Ask each group to present. After all the presentations, summarize as follows drawing on examples from each presentation:
 - a. *"Though these issues do not cause violence against women, they are **contributing** factors."*
 - b. *"In a world **WITHOUT** power imbalances, these contributing factors may indeed cause violent behavior. However, the behavior would not be directed primarily at women and others with less power, as it is now."*
13. At the top of the first flipchart listing the five contributing factors, write the title *"Contributing Factors."*
14. On the remaining third sheet of flipchart write in large print: *"The imbalance of power between women and men is the root cause of violence against women."*
15. Summarize as follows:
 - a. *"We have many rights as humans."*
 - b. *"There are power imbalances in our community. In most places, men as a group have power over women."*
 - c. *"When one person or group uses their power over another person or group it is a violation of human rights."*
 - d. *"Violence against women happens because of the power imbalance between women and men."*
 - e. *"This power imbalance leads to many negative consequences for both women and men, families and communities."*
 - f. *"Our silence as community members about this power imbalance allows it to continue to happen."*
16. Congratulate everyone for participating. Allow everyone to keep their Rights Cards and take them home.

Validation Options

Validation is another way to say “assessment” or “pre/post-test”. It is used to determine whether the participants in a training learned what the facilitator intended for them to learn. Instructions for how to use each validation method can be found in *Training Validation Methods: A how-to guide for assessing participant learning* downloadable at www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php

Select validation methods for each competency using the table below:

1. Choose whether the competency (specific skill) needs to be validated at a group or individual level.
2. Looking at the validation methods listed in that category (group or individual), select only **one** of the validation methods marked with and 'X' for each competency.
3. Plan a time in the training agenda to use the validation method you've chosen to test each competency.

		Suggested Validation Methods							
		Group Validation				Individual Validation			
		<i>Use if it is sufficient for the group, as a whole, to demonstrate the competency</i>				<i>Use if essential for each participant to demonstrate the competency her/himself</i>			
Competency <i>(Specific skill)</i>	Activity in Training*	Game Show	Card Game	Answers Bingo	Pick and Play	Activity in Training*	Exit Interview/ Role Play	Game Show (All Play)	Written Quiz
Describe the cause of VAW and relate it to Power Over.**		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Explain why poverty, alcohol, and other contributing factors are NOT the root cause of VAW.**		X	X	X	X		X	X	X

*Activity in Training includes many possibilities, depending on the module, including brainstorms, group practices, debates, agree/disagree/not sure exercise, and others. The *Teach Back* series can also be considered as an Activity in Training.

**See Validation Questions for this competency, to be used in Game Show, Card Game, Answers Bingo or Pick and Play methods, on next page.



Validation Questions



Pick a common contributing factor to VAW that people sometimes mistakenly list as the root cause of VAW (e.g. poverty, alcoholism, war, women's dress code, etc) and explain why it is NOT the root cause of VAW.

What is the root cause of violence against women?



Game Show



Facilitator's Note: Find out what the participants really learned! These cards can be cut out and used with Game Show, Card Game, Answers Bingo or Pick and Play validation methods.

Full descriptions of how to use each of these validation methods are available in the *Staff Skill Building Library*. Download at: www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php and go to *Training Validation Methods: A how-to guide for assessing participant learning*.

