

Day 1 Workshop

Power in practice: Strengthening your awareness and impact

Acknowledgement of country

Health Justice Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land where we are meeting, that of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

We pay respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

We recognise the strength and resilience of First Nations peoples.

We are committed to reconciliation with and self-determination of First Nations people, recognising that sovereignty has never been ceded.

Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.





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Welcome and Housekeeping

Our presenters today

Sharon Friel, Professor of Health Equity, Australian National University and Health Justice Australia Board member

With guests, Kimia Randall, Senior Solicitor, ACDL and Leah Roberts, Community MH Service Manager, Liverpool Hospital

Creating the conditions for this conversation

In this room, we practice:

- **Trust** — assuming good intent, while staying open and curious.
- **Empathy** — seeking to understand how others see the world before adding our own lens.
- **Compassion** — holding each other's stories gently, knowing we're all learning.
- **Active listening** — listening to understand, not to fix or defend.
- **Non-judgement** — noticing our reactions without closing off curiosity.
- **Accountability** — owning our stories, even when it's uncomfortable.

Is there anything else we need to consider?

Acknowledgement

This session is inspired by the work of Julie Diamond, Liz Skelton, and Brené Brown. We're grateful for their wisdom and thought leadership.

Power insights

Power is not a thing we hold — it's a dynamic between us.

- **Power is relational.** It exists in the space between people, systems, and stories.
- **We overestimate others' power and underestimate our own.** This distortion holds inequity in place.
- **Power is fluid.** It shifts with context, culture, and connection.
- **Power is expressed through trust.** When trust is present, power can be shared; when absent, power risks becoming defended or hidden.

Power, trust & accountability

Trust and accountability are the currencies of shared power.

- **Trust** invites openness and shared purpose — it's how relational power grows.
- **Accountability** sustains trust — it's how we stay in relationship when power shifts or harm occurs.
- Without accountability, power risks becoming unsafe; without trust, it becomes unused.
- In partnership, power isn't about control — it's about **shared responsibility for impact**.



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Reflections from Kimia and Leah

Three forms of power

Power takes different forms.

In any relationship or system, power can be:

- **Conferred** — through position or structure.
- **Perceived** — through social identity and belonging.
- **Cultivated** — through awareness and integrity.

Positional power

Positional power is conferred by systems.

- It comes from the roles, titles, and mandates that define authority in an organisation or network.
- Rooted in **structure** and **decision rights**.
- Sustained by **clarity, process, and integrity**.
- Risks distortion when authority is used to protect, not empower.
- Examples incl. title, expertise, decision making authority, access to resources, position in a hierarchy, level of influence.

Social power

Social power is perceived through visibility, relationships, and norms.

- Shaped by how society assigns credibility, legitimacy, and access.
- Rooted in **identity, networks, and cultural capital**.
- Sustained by **trust and inclusion**.
- Distorted by **bias and invisibility**.
- Examples incl. gender, culture, physical attributes/ability, age, sexuality, races etc.

Personal power

Personal power is cultivated through self-awareness and integrity.

- The ability to act with purpose and authenticity, regardless of position.
- Rooted in **values, clarity, and emotional intelligence**.
- Sustained by **accountability and humility**.
- Diminished when ego replaces awareness.
- Examples incl. knowledge/expertise, longevity/resilience, social connection and capital, connection to purpose/community/'source', lived experience etc.

Bringing it together

Power shifts depending on context – and how it's conferred, perceived, or cultivated.

In partnership work, awareness helps us:

- See and name where power sits,
- Notice how it moves, and
- Choose how to use it with trust and accountability.



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Reflections from Kimia and Leah

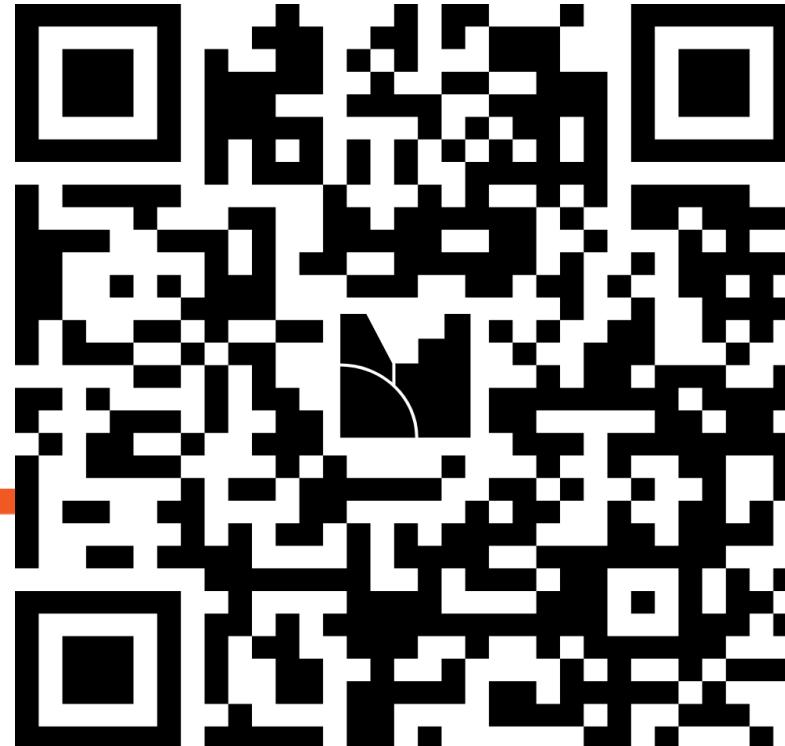
Reflection

- Where do you have power? In what contexts? And which kind of power do you have?
- What resources or privileges does the power you hold bring?
- What do you need to do differently in how you think about or use your power, to work with others to improve health, justice, and wellbeing?



Tell us what you think!

**Use QR code to answer a few
quick questions.**



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Lunch