

The background features a dark purple field with a pattern of overlapping, concentric white circles on the left side. A large, solid purple star with six rounded points is positioned in the upper left quadrant, partially overlapping the circular pattern.

HEALTH MENTORS SYMPOSIUM 2021

Ashley Moller-Hansen (Mentor)

Arizah Karim (OT)

Reyna Zarembo (PT)

Roopan Garcha (Nursing)

Grace Kim (Medicine)

ELIMINATING POWER DYNAMICS IN HEALTHCARE

Improving the patient experience through shared understanding and the incorporation of unique personal and professional perspectives

"My knowledge is *different* from your knowledge - not better."

"Formal education and training does not always equate to a deeper understanding of a particular disease or experience."

Where Can These 'Power Dynamics' Arise?

Patient-Provider

EXAMPLES:

- ❖ Patient - Physician
- ❖ Patient - Therapist
- ❖ Patient - Social Worker

Within a Health Discipline

EXAMPLES:

- ❖ Senior Nurse - Student Nurse
- ❖ Renowned Disease Expert - Family Physician
- ❖ Resident - Med Student

Between Health Disciplines

EXAMPLES:

- ❖ Physician - Nurse
- ❖ Surgeon - Physical Therapist
- ❖ Midwife - OB-GYN



How Do 'Power Dynamics' Impact Patients and Healthcare Professionals?

Sense of inferiority, feeling "talked down to"

- Patient dishonesty, discomfort, distrust
- Lack of strong work ethic and effective team communication
- Leads to medical errors

Unintentional body language or tone perceived as superiority

- Sitting at a patient's bedside vs. standing over them in their hospital bed
- "Ask don't tell", even if you're "the boss"

SEPARATING PERSONAL FROM PROFESSIONAL

Is this always beneficial to the patient?

- Care providers are humans too
- Using personal experiences in a professional manner to make valuable contributions to patient care
- Separating personal from professional may perpetuate inauthentic interactions
 - How do we care for someone in their darkest moments without becoming emotionally involved?

"During challenging or emotional health experiences, sometimes realizing that your care provider has been where you have been makes all the difference."

Journal Reflection Pearls

The language we use can carry power-differentials.

Patient advocacy can look different for each patient.

How you treat a person might have more of an impact on them than the actual treatment you provided.

I believe families feel more supported when the team is working together.

When a care provider acknowledges what may be underlying a person's experience, beyond their physical symptoms, this can significantly affect that person's health outcome.

Essentially the best way to empower our clients is by listening to them and being genuinely human.

*"No matter what our job is,
we need to focus on
humility, admitting that we
don't know everything, and
recognizing the value and
knowledge everyone else
brings to the team."*

