

## A POWER THREAT MEANING NARRATIVE

- 'What has happened to you?' (How is **Power** operating in your life?)
- 'How did it affect you?' (What kind of **Threats** does this pose?)
- 'What sense did you make of it?' (What is the **Meaning** of these situations and experiences to you?)
- 'What did you have to do to survive?' (What kinds of **Threat Response** are you using?)
- 'What are your strengths?' (What access to **Power resources** do you have?)
- 'What is your story?' (How does all this fit together?)

### POWER

**Biological or embodied power** eg strength, physical health, attractive appearance, sporting ability, and so on. Or pain, disease, brain injury, disfigurement or disability.

**Coercive power** or power by force. Eg using aggression, violence or intimidation to make someone do things they don't want to do or to frighten or control them.

**Legal power** The law is needed so that we can all live in a fair and peaceful society where our rights are protected. The law can also be used to impose unfair or harmful policies on vulnerable people.

**Economic and material power** Having enough money to live on, with good housing and enough to eat, and so on.

**Social or cultural capital** such as equal access to educational, job, training and leisure opportunities. It is also about whether we benefit from social connections and a sense of social confidence and belonging in the society we live in.

**Interpersonal power** Relationships with others, including family, colleagues, teachers, friends, neighbours, employers, healthcare staff, and public officials, are an important source of security and support. They can also have negative aspects such as neglect, bullying, abuse, abandonment, invalidation, shame, humiliation, discrimination and so on.

**Ideological power** Ideological messages, or ways of looking at ourselves and the world, can come from a whole range of sources.

### THREATS

*Relationships*

*Emotions and feelings* eg feeling anxious and overwhelmed .

*Social/community* eg feeling excluded or bullied

*Economic/material* eg not having enough to eat or a safe place to live.

*Environmental:* People may live, or have lived in, deprived and unsafe situations, either in their houses and/or in areas of poverty, conflict or war.

*Bodily:* This could include ill-health, chronic pain, disability, injury, brain injury, starvation, exhaustion, having your body attacked or invaded.

*Identity:* This includes lack of support to develop your own beliefs, values and identity; loss of status; loss of social, cultural or religious identity.

*Value base:* This includes loss of purpose, values, beliefs and meanings; loss of community histories, culture, rituals and practices.

*Knowledge and meaning* – such as the information or knowledge to make sense of your life in a way that is right for you.

## **MEANINGS**

Unsafe, afraid, attacked; abandoned, rejected; helpless, powerless; hopeless; invaded; controlled; emotionally overwhelmed; bad, unworthy; isolated, lonely; excluded; trapped, defeated, failed, inferior; guilty, blameworthy, responsible; betrayed; shamed, humiliated; sense of meaninglessness; unheard, silenced, no one listening

## **THREAT RESPONSES**

Fight, flight, freeze, flee; hypervigilance; panic, phobias; hearing voices; dissociating (losing track of time/place; flashbacks, nightmares; emotional numbing; giving up, low mood; suspicious thoughts; withdrawal; rapid mood changes; holding unusual beliefs or other experiences; physical symptoms such as tension, dizziness, physical pain; attention or concentration problems; confused/unstable sense of self; self-injury; self-starvation, binge eating, over-eating; grieving; self-blame and self-punishment; body hatred; compulsive thoughts and rituals; hoarding; avoidance of/compulsive use of sexuality; impulsivity; anger, rage, aggression and violence; suicidal thinking and actions; distrust; perfectionism, overwork; using drugs, alcohol, smoking.

## **STRENGTHS AND RESOURCES**

- Loving and secure early relationships
- Supportive partners, family and friends
- Social support and a sense of belonging
- Leisure and educational opportunities
- Having access to information/knowledge/alternative views (eg on mental health)
- Positive/socially valued aspects of your identity
- Skills/abilities – such as intelligence, resourcefulness, determination, talents
- Bodily resources – appearance, strength, health
- Belief systems - faiths, community values and so on
- Community practices and rituals
- Connections to nature and the natural world