

# Types of Power

UNDERUSE

OPTIMAL USE

OVERUSE



## Authority *Formal position or role within an organization.*

Avoiding making decisions  
Failing to hold people accountable  
Not providing clear and actionable guidance and feedback

**Allocating resources fairly**  
**Coaching, mentoring, and giving constructive feedback**  
**Clarifying roles, responsibilities, and expectations**  
**Placing the organization's goals ahead of self-interest**  
**Holding yourself to the standards you set for others**

Placing your needs and interests ahead of the organization's  
Making exceptions to rules to benefit you or your friends  
Refusing blame or blaming others  
Letting personal preferences direct your decision-making



## Expertise *Knowledge, information, and skills.*

Not offering your opinion when it could improve the conversation or decision-making  
Unwilling to mentor or guide junior employees  
Deferring to others even if you have expertise or insight that would add value to the conversation

**Sharing information freely**  
**Contributing your expertise in team settings**  
**Using knowledge to onboard, include, and support newcomers**  
**Teaching and mentoring others**

Having to be right or have the answer  
Giving opinions in matters outside your role or domain  
Being unwilling to ask questions or ask for help  
Disregarding others' expertise when making a decision  
Hoarding knowledge for your own gain



## Experience *Knowledge and wisdom that comes through life experience.*

Not speaking up when you see a potential mistake or shortcoming in the decision being discussed  
Not trusting your own experience, and deferring to experts or those with positional authority

**Using the wisdom of experience to guide the group through change or uncertainty**  
**Bringing in perspective from past experience to improve decision-making**

Shooting down ideas because "that won't work around here"  
Being closed to new ideas, or new ways of doing things



## Social Status *Rights, advantages, access, and resources granted or denied because of social identity—race, gender, class, religion, nationality, ethnicity, education, physical and mental ability, and sexual orientation.*

Not using your status or privilege to provide opportunities for others  
Being unaware of the privileges you have and failing to take advantage of them

**Understanding how your cultural background influences your attitudes and perceptions**  
**Having empathy and understanding about the challenges those with fewer privileges face**  
**Using your ease of access or advantages to benefit others**  
**Being aware of any beliefs and biases you hold about those different from you**

Acting with entitlement or exclusivity  
Denying or being blind to difference  
Believing that your advantages are earned solely on the basis of merit



## Informal *Rank within a group based on degree of belonging, e.g., popularity, seniority, and alliances.*

Not sharing your institutional knowledge with others  
Assuming newcomers or those with marginalized status can speak up and feel comfortable contributing

**Using your network and connections to open doors and help others advance**  
**Welcoming newcomers and those with marginalized status to make it easier for them to participate**  
**Noticing who hasn't spoken or participated in a meeting and inviting them to do so**

Making insider jokes or comments that leave people out  
Leaving newcomers to flounder  
Using your network to create alliances against those you dislike or are threatened by  
Creating ingroups, outgroups, and gossip to further your status



## Personal *Innate and developed traits, skills, and abilities that help you succeed and advance your interests.*

Feeling unworthy and lacking confidence, even if you are competent  
Underestimating yourself and overestimating others  
Playing it safe—being risk-averse and conflict-avoidant

**Regulating your emotions to be appropriate to the context**  
**Influencing others without formal authority**  
**Being able to cope with change and uncertainty**  
**Being open to feedback and engaging with others across differences**  
**Collaborating well with others**  
**Negotiating conflicts productively**

Using emotions to manipulate, deceive, or dominate others  
Monopolizing meetings and discussions  
Being overbearing, argumentative, bullying, or righteous  
Using your voice to advocate for your self-interests, above the good of the whole