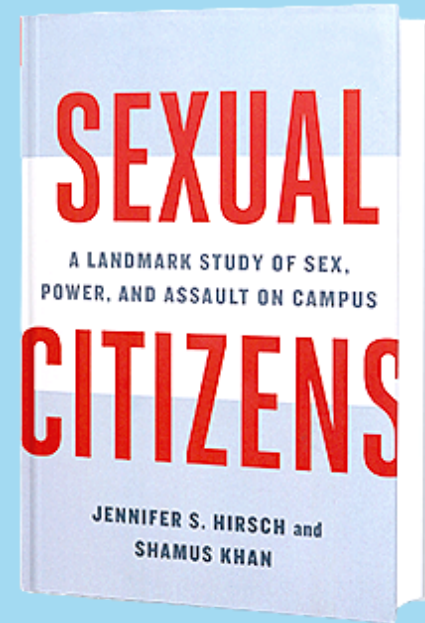


WINTER 2022

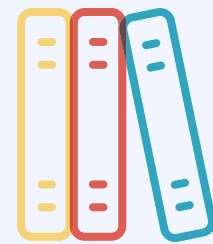
#TalkAboutItTUESDAY



**HOW DOES POWER
AFFECT OUR
RELATIONSHIPS?**

**power: the ability
to influence a
situation or
outcome**

Many things contribute to how much power someone has. Some of the biggest factors are **identities**, including gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and education status, among many others.



Power is an **active player** in every space and situation – it is not just a passive construct.

Power influences how we act and communicate, and it has huge implications for sexual violence.

**HOW DO POWER
DYNAMICS
AFFECT OUR
RELATIONSHIPS?**

Power dynamics play an important role in our relationships – both sexual and nonsexual. We can see power at play when we are speaking with a professor or boss, or when hanging out with our friends or significant other(s).



Here's some examples of power dynamics in various relationships:

- An employee feels like they have to do extra work because their boss requested it
- One friend gets to choose group activities because they have more money than their other friends
- A couple spends more time at one party's residence than the other's – this may also influence the **sexual geography** of a situation.





It's important that we strive to have healthy relationships, including ones where all parties work to give everyone equal amounts of power in various ways.

**HOW CAN WE
USE OUR POWER
IN PROSOCIAL
WAYS?**

Oftentimes, the people who hold the most power never have to think about it. This means it's important that we reflect on the power that we hold in various situations.



We can do this by being observant and asking ourselves questions like:



- What forms of power does my identity hold in my community or society? Does this apply to most situations?
- How does it feel when someone holds power over you? For example, with professors, parents, etc.
- What power dynamics are possible within the spaces I am a part of? For example, work environment, student orgs, friend groups, etc.

Once we've recognized the power that we hold in certain situations, we have the responsibility to use this power in prosocial ways. We can do this by:

- **Using the power you have in a space to equalize the power dynamic**
 - E.g., Hold space for others by giving them room to participate and be heard.
- **Asking yourself if there are ways you can help others gain power in a situation.**
 - E.g., Make sure individuals are comfortable, physically and mentally, in a new space or around new people.
- **Practicing how you can use your voice effectively and respectfully to uplift yourself and others.**
 - E.g., Think about and communicate your boundaries and support others in doing the same.