



MANIPULATION

MANIPULATION AND GASLIGHTING: A LEADER'S COVERT UNDERSTANDING OF BEHAVIOR

GOALS

1. Define manipulation and gaslighting.
2. Compare manipulation and gaslighting.
3. State the history of the term "Gaslighting."
4. State some behaviors related to manipulation and gaslighting.
5. Give reasons why recognizing manipulation and gaslighting is important to the nursing leader.

KEYWORDS FOR APPLICATION

1. Manipulation
2. Gaslighting

One of the most common practices of humanity is manipulation. Manipulative behaviors occur in two forms—"Manipulation" and a more specific form of manipulation called "Gaslighting."

DEFINITIONS

Manipulation, in general, is a harmful deliberate attempt to influence or elicit a desired response or behavior from another person that is not explicitly communicated to the other person.

Gaslighting is a form of manipulation colloquialism. Specifically, it is a *psychological manipulation* by verbally questioning a person's *sanity or twisting their sense of reality*. Some words infer unfit mental fitness or that the person is too sensitive. By manipulating in such a manner, the gaslit person starts to question their validity, thoughts, truth, perception, and memories—the person making the gaslighting attempts to gain power over another person by spreading false doubts. The doubts often cause the person who is the recipient of gaslighting to experience disorientation, distress, and distrust of others. It is covert emotional abuse.

HISTORY OF "GASLIGHTING" AS A WORD AND CONCEPT

Gaslighting originates from a 1938 play called *Gas Light* by Patrick Hamilton. Hence, the term "gaslighting" became a way to describe manipulative emotional abuse used by a manipulator to cause a person to question their insanity. Subsequently, it was produced as a film entitled *GASLIGHT* in the 1940s. The concept became popular again in the 1950s and 1960s and has consistently described psychological manipulation.

RECOGNIZABLE NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS RELATED TO MANIPULATION AND GASLIGHTING

To deceive and use emotional behaviors are the most common attempts to manipulate another person—confusing and undermining the best of any relationship. A Merri go-round of unpredictable maneuvers keeps the receiver of these behaviors off balance. One minute the manipulative person is cold, aloof, and angry—the next minute, warm and charming. Unpredictability, the result of manipulation efforts, is a threatening attempt to make a person feel guilty and diminish personal feelings of control and worth. The manipulator’s unpredictable behaviors often catch the unsuspecting person off guard. The attack occurs the internal glee of causing disruption is felt by the perpetrator while the gut-retching awareness increases by the recipient. Also, it is common to see and recognize evidence of exploitation, deception, abuse, and all kinds of devious behaviors.

Manipulation is not always bad, however. Attempting to talk a person into something good or for their best interest is positive. Physicians try to convince patients toward a certain positive behavior to improve health.

In general, are you being negatively manipulated? A few signs of the manipulator are:

1. A person is wearing you down by using guilt and shame to get their way.
2. Discouraging or refusing to allow you to have healthy relationships with other people.
3. Spreading false information about you and others.
4. Feigning ignorance.
5. Never taking the blame for anything.
1. Second-guessing your memory—“There is something wrong with you beyond repair.”
2. Expecting you to apologize because “It is all your fault.”
3. Trying to make others happy at your expense.
4. Attempting to cause you stress and make you feel overwhelmed.
5. Stating you are weak—or weaker than you used to be.
6. Expressing that your feelings do not matter.

Additionally, are you being “Gaslit” by someone? A few signs are:

1. Denying and scoffing at your recollections.
2. Calling your recollections “crazy” or “insensitive” when your needs or concerns are mentioned.
3. Expressing doubts about your feelings, behaviors, and state of mind.
4. Shifting blame to your mental state by retelling and twisting events to blame you for the happening.

IF YOU ARE FEELING MANIPULATED, ABUSED, OR GASLIT, DO THE FOLLOWING

1. Increase your awareness of what is happening and understand the impact of the behavior on your decisions.
2. Learn to say “NO” when manipulation of any sort is recognized or attempted by others.

3. Speak honestly to the manipulator that the manipulation is recognized as such, and tolerance is non-existent on your part.

CAN YOU TELL GENERAL MANIPULATION FROM SPECIFIC GASLIGHTING? IDENTIFY GASLIGHTING FROM THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES

1. You are crazy!!
 2. He cannot remember, and he has no idea what you are saying!
 3. I know it is your fault, and you need to apologize!
 4. How should I know?
 5. Shame on you for not remembering!
 6. She never thinks about what she is doing!
- (Number 1, 2, 5, and 6 seem likely to be psychological manipulation—gaslighting.)

AS A NURSING LEADER

You will make many decisions that are/will be questioned. Learn to be aware of the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of employees. Words expressed are important and reveal a hidden truth! However, actions often speak louder than words.

By increasing your awareness of potential manipulative attempts, you will know your supporters and adversaries. Learn to reward positive and supportive non-manipulative behaviors. Watch your words to others carefully to support positive behaviors by others. Be open and honest in your communication with no attempts to manipulate. If you identify a manipulative behavior, state the recognition of the behavior only—letting the perpetrator recognize that you “pick up” on such behaviors. Then--let the employee draw judgment on their chosen behavior. Listen carefully--An employee’s attempt at personal introspection reveals a great deal!

IT IS AMAZING HOW INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE PROVIDES THE POWER TO EVALUATE OTHERS BEHAVIOR AND INTENTIONS CORRECTLY. BEING ABLE TO DISCERN MANIPULATIVE BEHAVIORS IN OTHERS WILL HELP TO MAKE INFORMED LEADERSHIP DECISIONS NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.

REFERENCES

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<http://www.betterhelp.com>

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