



# Empowerment

**More than a sexy word!**

**Bernie Gibbins**

cooperation and working together

for health gain and social well being in border areas



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# Donegal Definition

- **empower**  
verb

to give someone official authority or the freedom to do something

- **empowering**  
adjective

Something that is empowering makes you more confident and makes you feel that you are in control of your life:

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# The Human Service Context

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## International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Work

*“The social work profession promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.”*

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# Effective empowerment requires skills in balancing

Working Towards  
Effective Adult Protection

Desire for  
empowerment



Desire for  
power

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# Empowerment provides:

- Control
- A voice
- Individual respect
- Justice and equity
- Access
- confidence

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# The possible dilemmas

- Best decisions
- Potential for error in choice
- Negative experience
- Service user frustration
- Decreased focus of control for professional
- Service risk related to service user choice
- Service worker frustration

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# Adult protection and empowerment?

Requires workers to:

- Inform service users and carers
- Be responsible regarding applied practice
- Develop appropriate networks
- Involve self in policy comment and development
- Understand the context for the individual and wider service user group

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# The DuBois and Miley model

Networking	Individual context
Resources	Development

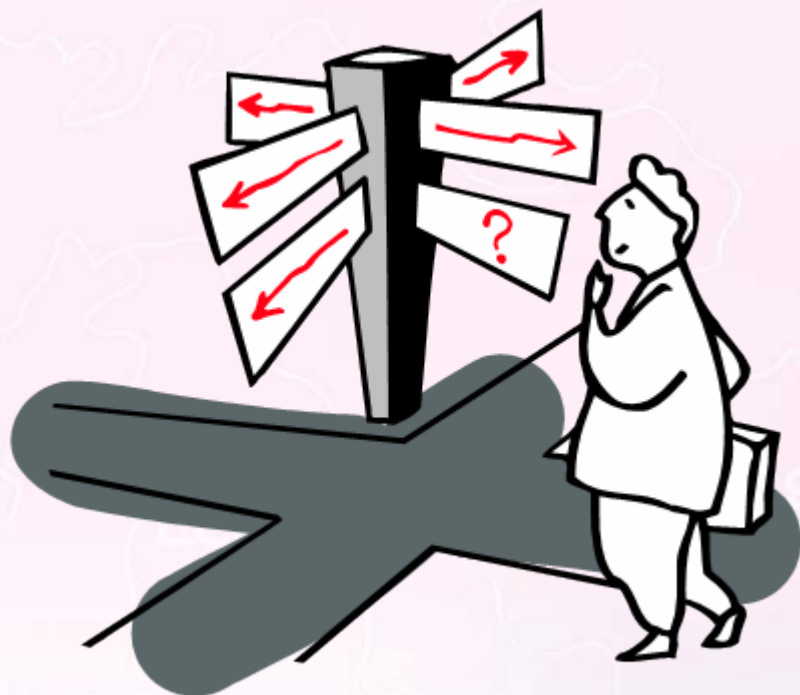
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# Worker roles linked to empowerment

Working Towards  
Effective Adult Protection



- Facilitator
- Educator
- Assessor
- Connector
- Advocate
- Commissioner

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# Empowerment requires recognition and co-operation

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