

Child to Parent Violence (CPV)

Child to parent violence is recognised as an increasing factor in the breakdown of adoptions and foster care placements. Following the publication in 2014 of "Beyond the Adoption Order" (Selwyn, J et al) awareness of this issue has increased and there has been a response by the DfE providing some support to families who experience violence in the home.

Domestic violence can take many forms including general destruction of property, use of body weight to "accidentally" barge people, hitting, kicking, punching and use of weapons including ordinary domestic items (chairs, rolling pins) and extending to using sharp objects such as scissors or knives. The violence may be specifically or generally directed at members of the household, if it is specific then it is often the maternal figure who is the object of the abusive behaviour, which will also include verbal abuse and threats in the majority of cases.

Effectively managing CPV is extremely difficult due to issues regarding use of restraint (safe handling or break away training is not usually offered to parents). This is because restraining a child against their will is seen as a safeguarding issue for this child, regardless of consequences for the parent. Secondly, many parents feel shame as a result of the violence they are experiencing, and are fearful that the child or children will be removed from their care. This is occasionally reinforced by attitudes which imply that CPV results from poor parenting instead of recognising that it arises from complex issues of childhood trauma in many cases involving adopted or fostered children. Parents are therefore left in a position where they feel impotent and ineffective, isolated from support. Furthermore, their home, which should be a place of safety and refuge becomes a frightening and stressful place.

At the present time, the main solution offered to CPV is Non Violent Resistance (NVR) which was introduced into the UK by Peter Jakob. NVR is based on the work of Haim Omer and passive resistance strategies such as those employed by Ghandi.

NVR concentrates on rebuilding the relationship with the child and reducing the stress in the household by identifying areas of conflict and managing these in a different way. This is combined with an approach that exposes the issue of violence and explicitly seeks to address this openly. In this, the family has support of trusted people who may be assigned specific roles and who are trusted to be fully on board with the process.

Key processes of NVR

- The child is central to the process
- The parents are supported by their trainer and by identified family and friends that assume specific roles
- The relationship between the parents and the child is crucial
- Parents learn to employ techniques to stay calm
- Parents learn to de-escalate
- Parents learn appropriate responses to difficult situations such as deferring response until the situation has calmed.
- Parents remember to repair the relationship and reconcile with their child.
- The unacceptable behaviours are clearly identified and challenged.
- The process involves reflection after the event.

NVR can be provided by NATP as a one to one with a trained parent consultant over a series of telephone or Skype sessions. NATP often run one day taster training in NVR to cover the essential points (Please look at the map on website for forthcoming events).

Here at NATP we are also actively exploring additional ways of managing violence in the home and always updating training to incorporate latest methods.