



# Reducing Parental Conflict Project— Update No.3

## What is the project about?

The Reducing Parental Conflict Project, sponsored by the Department of Work & Pensions, aims to increase awareness and provide support & training for practitioners.

There is strong evidence that conflict between parents – whether together or separated – can have a significant negative impact on children’s mental health and long-term life-chances. Not all conflict is damaging, but where this is *frequent, intense and poorly resolved it can harm children’s outcomes*.

Addressing couple conflict and the quality of parental relationships is a critical component of improving outcomes for children. Parenting interventions for families without addressing parental conflict are unlikely to be effective or improve outcomes for children.

## New Regional Website

**WHY RELATIONSHIP MATTERS - Disagreements and arguments are completely normal but if they are becoming a problem then help is at hand. Relationship Matters is a new partnership between Bradford Council and 14 other Local Authorities across Yorkshire and Humber Region getting together to help families who may be having relationship difficulties.** A new website was recently launched to offer families information, tips and help—and what better time as the coronavirus is leading to big changes in the way we live our everyday lives. Whether couples are together or separated, disagreements are completely normal. But evidence shows that frequent, intense and poorly resolved conflict can harm children’s outcomes.

All relationships have tricky moments, it is how they’re experienced and resolved that matters, especially at the moment for getting us through enforced self- isolation, lock down and social distancing. We are all spending longer periods of time with our loved ones and this is bound to bring about some added challenges.

**Relationship Matters** can help everyone recognise the signs such as:

- Arguing, rows, shouting all the time with each other about things like, money, parenting, housework etc...
- Worries about splitting up
- Sulking, silent treatment, slamming doors or walking away from each other
- Are they anxious or worried which gets in the way of managing everyday life?
- Are they not able to say sorry after an argument and move on?
- Are they using hurtful texts, emails or Facebook against each other?

“I hate it when they yell, they do not even know how it makes me feel just invisible” Child 7 yrs.

“I feel unloved / ignored as mum & dad are preoccupied with their own conflicts, Child 12 yrs.

The website provides tips, information and help to stay calm, work out what needs to happen and signpost in order to get some help. For more information go to <https://relationshipmatters.org.uk>

Visitors from Bradford are amongst the most frequent to the site, so please take a look and share with colleagues and families.

Sometimes it can be challenging to separate out between parental conflict and domestic abuse; if there are any concerns around controlling/coercive behaviour, violence or fear then families should seek advice from domestic violence services.

## Practitioner Training

### Who should think about parental conflict? And what training is available?

All practitioners working with families should think about parental conflict. A multi-agency training programme has been available for practitioners and managers working with children and families and included the following:

Module 1 (e-learning): Understanding Parental Conflict and its impact on Child Outcomes: How can I use the evidence base to support parent relationships?

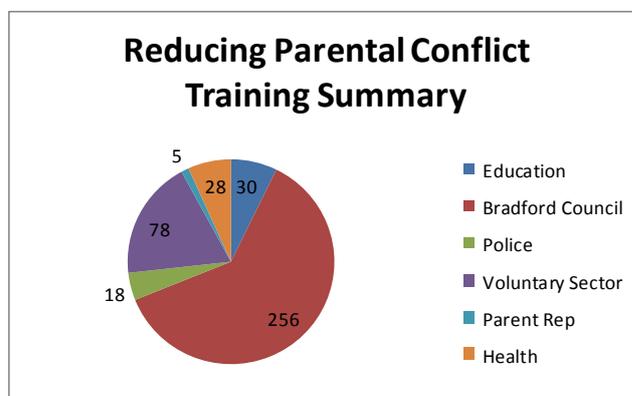
Module 2: Recognising and Supporting Parents in Parental Conflict: Applying knowledge, skills and techniques

Module 3: Working with Parents in Conflict: How do I support, refer or intervene?

Module 4: Reducing Parental Conflict: The role of Supervisors and Managers: How can I support my frontline practitioners?

We also offered the opportunity for practitioners to become 'Practice Champions' through completion of the 2-day 'Train the Trainer' course. The chart below shows the number of those who have already accessed the training in some form and from which agency.

Whilst this external training has nearly come to an end, we are planning on continuing to share the information learnt by offering shortened versions of the training through our Practice Champions. Please keep an eye out for further updates.



## Practitioner Training

Information shared was useful and made you reflect on your everyday practice. Some easy measures to ensure that you are able to implement the learning whilst working with your families.

I really enjoyed the parental conflict training and will use the knowledge I gained personally as well as professionally. It gave me the opportunity to really think about the family dynamics as a whole and how this impacts on children and can directly impact on children's behaviour.

I gained techniques on how to re word sentences to empower families and reduce the chances of parental conflict occurring.

## Practice Champion Feedback & Further Training Opportunities

Our Practice Champions are looking forward to delivering the training via an online platform—please look out for dates from September. Here is some of their feedback from the training and how they have been using what they have learnt so far.

“This is a very encouraging course and highlights a part of our work that is important to the wellbeing of families and children that we work with”.

“The information and tools offered have given us more direction and confidence to work well in the area of “tackling conflict in families”.

“I have used role play with some parents to help raise their awareness and understanding of the impacts that arguing around children can have on their wellbeing and mental health”.

“I have been talking to schools about lower level conflict and the problems this can cause, I have also shared the new website with them. Schools have been open to discussions about this and are recognising it as an important issue”.

### What's next?

The local Steering group continues to meet and work to an updated plan. In the coming months we will:

- ◆ Review advice and support to schools
- ◆ Agree and publish a local partnership statement on how we can all help talk about and reduce parental conflict
- ◆ Launch local multi-agency briefing sessions
- ◆ Complete a survey with practitioners who attended training to inform ongoing practice support
- ◆ Consider commissioning new and targeted support to couples
- ◆ Work across the region to track impact and promote the regional website

## Other useful tips and information:

<https://www.oneplusone.org.uk/stress-and-alcohol-guide>

Coping with stress and drinking is an online resource for parents. It aims to: raise awareness of the impact of stress on relationships and parental conflict on children and increase parents' capacity to cope with stress and stop using alcohol as a coping mechanism. This guide is for frontline practitioners who work with parents. It will show you how to introduce parents to the resource and support them as they work through it.

<https://www.oneplusone.org.uk/mybt-guide>

Me, You and Baby Too is an online resource designed to help new and expectant parents adapt to the changes that parenthood can have on their relationship. This guide is for frontline practitioners who work with parents. It will show you how to introduce parents to the resource and support them as they work through it.

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/see-hear-respond>

See Hear Respond is a partnership to help children, young people and families cope with the Covid-19 crisis. The See, Hear, Respond Partnership is a new service funded by the Department for Education. With your help, the See, Hear, Respond Partnership will quickly identify and support children, young people and families who are struggling to cope with the impacts of coronavirus. Its aim is to provide early intervention before these children reach the threshold for statutory intervention.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/working-well-with-fathers-tickets-117750331411>

Working well with Fathers when supporting family stress and inter-parental conflict. Community of Practice online event **29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 9:45 – 11:45am.**

<https://relationshipmatters.org.uk> - a great source of advice, guidance and links to support.

<https://reducingparentalconflict.eif.org.uk/> Central base of parental conflict evidence and tools.

<https://www.oneplusone.org.uk/> Gives information, access to 24/7 phone line and online chat/parenting support.

<https://www.tavistockrelationships.org/> Advanced practice, training and research to support couples, individuals and families. Online relationship help available.

<https://www.relate.org.uk/> - Relationship support provider. Can offer support over the phone or through online chat services

<https://click.clickrelationships.org/home/all-issues/> - Online relationship support and advice.

### **[Family Mediation Services in Bradford & District \(Legal Aid Approved Providers\)](#)**

<https://www.wyfms.co.uk/>

<https://www.williscroft.co.uk/>

<https://www.switalskis.com/personal-law/family-law/>

<https://yourfamilymatters.org.uk/>

