

Standing Strong in Solidarity with Non-Violent Resistance

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Hopes for today...

- Ask the question **‘what can we do and say when a parent tells us “I am afraid of my child”** (when that child is under 18 years old)?
- Explain some of the **ways we understand the problems** of parents living in fear of their child.
- Suggest we see these problems as **human rights concerns.**
- Describe what **social workers, therapists and others in Ireland** say about the NVR model of intervention
- **Listen**



Daniel O' Connell, Mary Robinson, President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins
Cultural & historical traditions include commitment to human rights and
social justice.



First steps...

- Personal context
- Dilemmas for parents, families and practitioners...



Case example: not available on handouts



What happens next?



How do we think & talk about it?

- The need to define the problem clearly....
- Influences the kind of conversations we have with families.
- Influences what we do about it



Dilemmas when talking with parents who are afraid of their child.

- How can we understand the problem of parents living in fear of their child?
- Where do we stand in relation to this problem?
- What do families who live with this fear have in common? What are the common factors?



What do all/ most families who experience these problems have in common?

- Family composition?
- Family socio-economic status?
- Gender?
- Culture?
- Family experiences of domestic violence/ abuse?
- Juvenile Offending Behaviour?
- Attachment difficulties/ disorders
- Learning difficulties?
- School difficulties?
- Mental health concerns/ diagnosis?
- Parental or child alcohol/ drug abuse?
- Experiences of child abuse and neglect?



It seems they have none of the
above in common.

- But practice experience & research suggests...



Parents who feel isolated & alone, without support.



Habits of interaction with escalation cycles that lead to abuse/ violence. (Gallagher 2004a; Omer 2004; Weinblatt & Omer 2008; Omer 2013; Coogan, 2018a, b).



Parents who are afraid of their child

Implications?

- If **fear**,
- **Isolation** and **habits of interaction with escalation cycles** are common among some families we work with,
- what are the implications of these common factors for our starting points?

Implications? We can help....

- Identify different **habits of relationship and interaction** – change some, reinforce others,
- Reduce **social isolation** by **activating social networks**,
- Identify and providing concrete skills and practical support to **restore confidence & competence**



But we still need to find a way of thinking & talking about the problem....

And we need a clear starting point

The need for a clear starting point.....

- Clinical labels/ diagnosis (e.g. ADHD; “attachment disorder”) can distract us by seeming to provide an excuse.
- It can be difficult to see that a child can be both a victim and a perpetrator of abuse.
- It can be difficult to know what to do first and where to focus our intervention.
- Where do we stand?



The Responding to Child to Parent Violence Research Project 2013-15.



RCPV Research Project 2013-15

- Action research project – partnership between universities & practitioners
 - Involved 5 countries – Bulgaria, England, Ireland, Spain, Sweden ; Aims of the project included
 - raise awareness,
 - Map knowledge & services ;
 - share knowledge & experiences,
 - Develop & measure the impact of 2 training programmes (one was NVR).

RCPV Research Project 2013-15

- Outputs included:
 - Practitioner toolkits/ handbooks on Power2Change, Break4Change, and Non Violent Resistance Programmes, free to download.
 - Validated self-efficacy and evaluation questionnaires.
 - Research Reports on CPV in 5 EU countries and on policies and interventions.
 - For more information, see www.cpvireland.ie and www.rcpv.eu



What did parents tell us in
the RCPV study? (Wilcox et al, 2015).

Parents in the RCPV Project 2013-15

- *“..... lots of shouting,*
- *smashing things,*
- *taking my bag,*
- *threatening to break things, threatening behaviour,*
- *physical violence,*
- *smashing various parts of the house and being very out of control.*
- *This just got worse and worse. All the boundaries I had been using before just were not working”*
- (Jane, mother, England).

Parents in the RCPV Project 2013-15.

- *“It’s very distressing for everybody and it just stresses the other children in the family.....*
- *it’s very wearing, as a parent, to constantly be very conscious of what you’re saying,*
- *how you’re saying it, your tone of voice, and constantly being aware that situations around may influence his outbursts,*
- *that’s very wearing, very tiring”* (Deborah, foster mother, England).

How can we understand the problem?

- No single definition of the problem.
- Parent abuse/ Child to mother abuse/ child to parent violence?
 - Conventionally - A harmful act ***intended*** to gain power and control over one's parents. The abuse can be physical, psychological or financial.
 - See (Cottrell 2001), Cottrell & Monk (2004) Coogan (2011, 2012)

CPVA? A clear & nuanced definition of the problem.....

- Child to parent violence and abuse is an abuse of power through which a **child** or adolescent (under the age of 18 years) **coerces, controls or dominates parents/ carers**
 - See Coogan, 2018a, b; Coogan, 2016a, b; Wilcox et al, 2015; Lauster et al 2014; Coogan & Lauster 2014b; Holt 2013; Coogan 2012; Tew and Nixon 2010.



CPVA is about **Power & Fear...**

- What is the difference between children testing of boundaries and child to parent violence and abuse?
 - The issues of **power** and **fear** clarify the difference.
- If parents feel they must adapt their behaviour due to threats or use of violence/ abuse by a child, then there is child to parent violence and abuse.
 - (Wilcox 2012; Coogan, 2016a, b; Coogan, 2018a, b).



CPVA as a Human Rights Issue?



CPVA as a Human Rights Issue?

- everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person (art. 3)
- ***The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)***

CPVA as a Human Rights Issue?

- no one should be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or
- degrading treatment or punishment (art. 5).
- ***The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)***



Case example: not available on handouts

- What to say, what to do....?

One response to child to this problem in Ireland

- The adapted NVR model:
- 10 families, 20 months.
- *(With thanks to Weinblatt & Omer, 2008; see also Coogan, 2011, 2014)*

Non Violent Resistance in Ireland – an adapted model

- Brief intervention period – up to 15 sessions.
- Intervention with parent/s (not the child),
 - including both parents where parents are separated but have on-going involvement in the child's life.

Non Violent Resistance in Ireland – an adapted model

- Sessions at once a week or once every two weeks, dependent on need.
- An approach that is
 - collaborative,
 - solution-focused
 - psycho-educational
 - therapeutic approach &
 - systemic
- Sessions available for child if necessary/ requested – a different practitioner (usually).

Non Violent Resistance in Ireland – an adapted model. What happened next?

- Experiences of the family I spoke about
 - Other parents experiences,
 - review of cases,
 - some school reports,
 - Requests for training in NVR.
- NVR seems to be an easy to grasp model responding to the needs of families and services for a
 - Brief & effective
 - & non-blaming intervention model that empowers and supports parents, while also protecting children.

Pause point....review & what is next?

- First steps in NVR
- What did we see/ hear?
- 3 common factors?
- CPVA – a human rights issue
- What happened next?
- Research with practitioners – what did they do & say?
- Some questions.....

Child to Parent Violence – An Exploration of Non-Violent Resistance

(Coogan, 2016a)

- Action research & constructivist grounded theory project:
- 3 Research Questions:
- *How do child and family practitioners assess, engage with and intervene with CPV?*
- *What is the response of practitioners to the adapted NVR programme?*
- *What is the effect, if any, of the NVR training on practitioner self-efficacy?*

Child to Parent Violence – An Exploration of Non-Violent Resistance (Coogan, 2016a)

- *Development of NVR 2 day training programme*
- *Ethical approval (NUI Galway)*
- *Pilot training programme*
- *Full implementation of training, data collection & analysis.*

Intervention with Child to Parent Violence – An Exploration of Non Violent Resistance.

○ Quantitative Questionnaires.

- Pre (T1); Post (T2); Follow Up (T3).
- Family Support Practitioners in Dublin city;
- Multi-agency family support group in west of Ireland
- Child protection social workers in west of Ireland.
- Wait-list control group (domestic violence service).
- Components of Practitioner Self-Efficacy:
 - Knowledge & Skill; Understanding;
 - Confidence;
 - Conversations.

Intervention with Child to Parent Violence – An Exploration of Non Violent Resistance.

- Qualitative interviews post training.
 - 19 in total:
 - voluntary agencies = 15;
 - statutory agency = 4.
 - Grounded theory method of data analysis & interpretation – support; ‘players’; empowerment.



What did practitioners in Ireland say about NVR?

(Coogan, 2016a Child to Parent Violence – An Exploration of Non Violent Resistance; see also Coogan, D 2016b Listening to the Voices of Practitioners.....)

What did practitioners in Ireland say about NVR? (Coogan, 2016a)

- Participants responses to the 2 day NVR training programme indicated that their sense of self-efficacy ***significantly increased:***
 - ++***Awareness & understanding*** of CPV
 - ++***Confidence & skill*** in responding to CPV
- Practitioners reported that NVR had positive outcomes when implemented by parents with whom they worked

What did practitioners in Ireland say about NVR?

(Coogan, 2016a)

- “I think NVR looks like a very good approach... where parents really have lost, you know, their own sense of their own power and are feeling a sense of helplessness and hopelessness around it....”
 - **‘Sean’, Family Support Centre, Voluntary Service.**

What did practitioners in Ireland say about NVR?

(Coogan, 2016a)

- *So I think, the model, the steps were quite clear and I liked that about it.*
- *It was kind of something that you could get your head round and, and take a parent through.*
- *'Cian', Child Protection Social Worker*

What did practitioners in Ireland say about NVR?

(Coogan, 2016a)

- "...having used it (the NVR intervention model), I certainly think its empowering to the parent and the solution focused aspect of it is, you know, very important.
- And I think it works really well
- and its empowering to the parent"
- *'Ellen', Family Support Worker, Voluntary Agency.*



What did practitioners in Ireland say about NVR? (Coogan, 2016a)

- “That was one of the main things that stood out for me about it, that it was more kind of co-operative and open and with dialogue....People feel more listened to”
 - **‘Kate’, Child Protection Social Worker.**

NVR in Ireland today...and in the future?

- 700+ children & family practitioners trained in NVR in Ireland (but unclear how many use it in practice)
 - Standing with parents in different services:
 - Mental Health
 - Family Support
 - Youth Justice
 - Psychotherapists in Private practice
- Practitioner/ researcher partnerships
 - RCPV Project
 - Practitioner as a PhD student – Parents & NVR

NVR in Ireland today...and in the future?

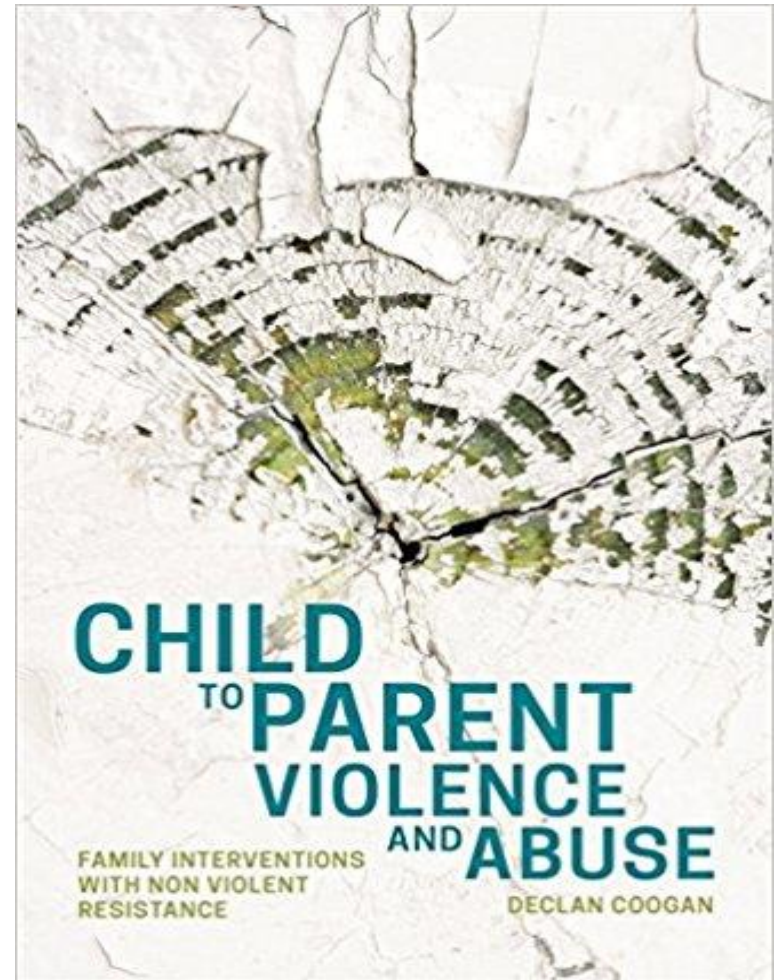
- A national telephone support service offers NVR as one of the supports for parents who call them – Parentline
- New inter-disciplinary course for practitioners in Non Violent Practice at the university (5 Fridays in March-April 2019)
- Websites www.cpvireland.ie & www.newauthorityparenting.ie
- www.rcpv.eu

NVR in Ireland today...and in the future?

- The future?
 - A practitioner needs to be 'lucky' to find NVR training
 - A parent needs to be 'lucky' to find NVR
 - How to inform evidence based practice (where evidence is limited)?
 - NVR principles & practices – what is essential?
 - Is CPVA a domestic violence problem?
 - The place & voice of the child in NVR intervention?

Thank you very much. Comments/ Questions?

- Paperback book available at www.jkp.com and www.amazon.com
- Some useful resources: www.cpvireland.ie and also www.newauthorityparenting.ie and www.rcpv.eu
 - My email? Declanp.coogan@nuigalway.ie



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