

Reflections on Non Violent Resistance training

I completed a Foundation Level Training in Non Violent Resistance (NVR) delivered by Partnership Projects. This comprised of a four-day course (with a confirmation of attendance certificate) attended on 20, 21, 22 January and 2 March 2020. The first three days were delivered by Rachael Aylmer and Jill Lubienski and the fourth day by Jackie.

I am a Senior Practitioner (Social Work) working in an Adoption Team for a voluntary agency. I work with adoptive parents and children. The children who are placed for adoption have often experienced trauma and loss and can demonstrate challenging behaviours when processing their trauma, including violence towards parents and siblings. I work to support parents in therapeutically parenting their children and to enable the development of positive, secure attachment relationships. I have an MA in Social Work and am registered with Social Work England.

The first three days of the training focussed on the core principles of NVR – refusing to give in to taboos, de-escalating, developing support, raising presence through positive action and reconciliation. During the training I felt reassured that the principles of NVR were in line with attachment practice and the principles of therapeutic parenting which we work within and NVR is very much complementary with adoption practice. The course was very experiential and involved a number of role plays to help practice the techniques we would be advising parents in and how to coach parents through role play before implementing with their children. We worked in pairs and small groups to apply the methods on one another; to both practice and experience the techniques. Day four was an opportunity to then reflect, having started to work with families using the principles of NVR. This was very helpful in sharing real life experiences and reflecting on our learning and practice together. NVR is a powerful tool in helping parents to raise their presence within the home with their child, whilst also looking to re-establish the connection within their relationship.

I have started to explore NVR with a family who have experienced violence and controlling behaviours from their daughter. They have found the early principles of de-escalation helpful in lowering their arousal levels during times of potential conflict and raising parental presence through small acts of parental disobedience. I have also explored reconciliation gestures to encourage parents to make unconditional gestures of love to their daughter, to reassure her of the consistency of their relationship and positive acceptance.

I feel that I can now start to assist families who are experiencing violence and controlling behaviours using NVR and thank FPSA for supporting my attendance. The voluntary agency I work for are receiving an increasing number of referrals for post adoption support where children are displaying violent or controlling behaviours and this is presenting a real challenge for adoptive parents. Adoptive parents are very open to exploring the principles of NVR to help empower them and raise their parental presence within their home.