

Non Violent Resistance – 4 day workshop. Introductory Level Training.

Thanks to FPSA funding, I attended a four day introductory level training course in Non Violent Resistance (NVR). I work as a Family and Systemic Psychotherapist, and the systemic core of NVR grabbed my immediate attention. One of the essential beliefs of the approach is that you cannot control the other; the only person that you can control is yourself. By controlling yourself, you may influence change in your relationship that may then influence change in the other. This fits with my worldview as a systemic therapist, and so much of the approach 'just made sense' to me.

The training was provided by Partnership Projects in conjunction with the Birmingham Systemic Therapy department. Peter Jakob and Michelle Shapiro were inspirational trainers who clearly know their subject material. There was a lot of time to practice and use role-play, which was a very powerful experience in terms of grasping the ideas but also connecting with the emotions of parents and children that are caught in a cycle of violence. The course also covers the use of NVR in group settings. NVR can be used when there are a range of controlling behaviours that the child shows in relationship to the parent, not just where there is violence. There is a growing evidence base and NVR can be used with populations such as looked after children and in residential / inpatient settings.

I was really excited and motivated by the approach, and for days afterwards felt like I was 'buzzing'. I have felt really hopeful and confident in talking with parents about working in this way, because I think the quality of the training inspired that hope and confidence in the approach. I have started using it already with families, and parents are reporting positive change really early on in the process.

The ideas of de-escalation and rebuilding the relationship which are at the core of NVR, often occur to me when I am working with families irrespective of the approach I am using. Parents seem able to understand and relate to these ideas well. There is a focus on DOING, which feels refreshing to me but also something that parents can connect with – they feel like they are actively doing things to make a difference, and not just talking about them. The focus on having a community of supporters also fits with a systemic approach, and has reminded me to keep that focus on the whole system such as friends, school staff, faith leaders etc.

The course materials have been invaluable and there as a back-up in case I need to go back and check something. There has been a lot on information provided about each part of the approach and also in delivering group work and the hybrid model (of group intervention plus some individual parent sessions).

I would be really keen to progress onto the advanced level training at some stage once I have more experience of using the approach, which takes into account the impact of trauma and working with trauma.

It is not an underestimate, to say that thanks to the FPSA supporting me in attending this training, families are immediately benefiting, in a life-changing way. I can't express enough gratitude. If there are local workers who would like to form a practice development / peer supervision group, I would definitely be interested.

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