



**Training & Interventions
to
Reduce Parental Conflict
and
Promote Positive Outcomes for Children
April 2022
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Our Mayday trainers have delivered the Department of Work and Pensions Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) programme to multidisciplinary teams since 2019. Based on feedback from delegates, discussions with RPC Leads, and our significant experience working in Children's Services, we delivered an enhanced version of the original RPC modules.

We have observed some excellent practice but have also identified many gaps in knowledge, skills and confidence when engaging with parents. In April 2021, we created and have been delivering additional programmes to address these gaps, and the feedback has been highly positive.

Who is the training for?

Our programmes support practitioners, supervisors and managers in building awareness and developing the confidence, knowledge and skills to work with parents to reduce ongoing poorly resolved conflict and improve outcomes for them and their children. Our child-centred, trauma-informed approach empowers practitioners to become more curious and overcome their fears by exploring beyond the presenting symptoms ensuring they get the child's voice.

If you want feedback about our training, we can make this available to you. However, you can also contact the RPC leads from the Local Authorities below where we have been delivering our programmes:

- Surrey
- Stoke
- Oxford
- Brent
- Harrow
- Plymouth
- Bracknell
- Ealing

Training is via Zoom or Face to Face

For further information and pricing please send an email to:

elaine@maydaydvs.co.uk



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- 2) Getting it Right for Children
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1. Co-parenting Without Conflict (Reducing Parental Conflict)

Without our knowledge and experience of working in safeguarding and supporting children and their families, we have produced a one-day programme that provides participants with opportunities to explore the causes of parental conflict and acquire knowledge, skills, and techniques to support families. Our trauma-informed programme adds value, includes the child's voice, and considers diversity and difference. Practitioners will have access to our **toolkit (available on Amazon <https://amzn.to/3uEkUuJ>)** to select tools to intervene with families. We have included tools for direct work with families.

Target Audience

This one-day programme is for anyone who works directly with families to reduce parental conflict e.g. Early Help Practitioners, Social Workers, Health Visitors, Family Workers, School Safeguarding Leads, Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Practitioners, Youth Workers, Family Intervention Workers – anyone who is named in the Statutory Guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children

Learning Objectives are for practitioners to:

- Understand the difference between parental conflict and domestic abuse to ensure the correct response (local authority threshold criteria)
- Develop their understanding and knowledge of destructive parental conflict so that they can identify parental relationship distress at an early stage
- Develop their understanding of how conflict escalates in the parental relationship and be able to support parents using meaningful strategies to de-escalate the conflict
- Become familiar with tools for assessing needs, parental vulnerabilities, stressors and triggers
- Consider diversity and difference and the implications for supporting parents in conflict
- Understand the importance of engaging both parents in resolving parental conflict
- Understand the impact of parental conflict on children and use a range of tools to ensure their voice is an inherent part of the support provided to parents
- Build confidence in key areas of practice – empathetic questioning, effective interviewing techniques, professional curiosity, empowering parents to change
- Understanding the cycle of change and parents' readiness to change
- Develop a collaborative SMART plan to support parents focusing on protecting children from parental conflict and potential significant harm



2. Trauma Informed Complex Co-Parenting (one day programme with toolkit)

The aim of this one-day training programme is to equip practitioners with the skills and knowledge to work more confidently with parents who are displaying complex and challenging behaviour. Parents may have experienced their own Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) resulting from intergenerational destructive parental conflict and can struggle to acknowledge their behaviour is adversely impacting on the children. They can feel judged and blamed and often withdraw from support as many practitioners focus on the presenting symptoms and may be fearful of making things worse.

Target Audience

Our original one-day programme is for anyone who may be working with more challenging parents who are using disguised compliance and manipulation as highlighted in recent serious case reviews. We are currently delivering this programme to participants from children's services, schools, health, mental health and the voluntary sector.

Learning Objectives

This programme will empower front line practitioners to use their professional curiosity and improve outcomes with families by:

- Understanding how the "Grey Areas" between Parental Conflict and Domestic Abuse are causing harm to the child
- Exploring the parallels highlighted in recent Serious Case Reviews.
- Recognising and responding to the signs of Parental Alienation
- Exploring how unconscious bias can be a barrier to achieving positive outcomes
- Approaching the families through a Trauma Lens
- Engaging more confidently with challenging parents
- Incorporating Social Graces to build rapport with parents and children
- Confidently capturing the child's lived experience by identifying their role within the conflict
- Providing tools and strategies to improve communication between practitioners and families.



3. Engaging with Fathers

A father's ability to protect his child is often overlooked by practitioners working with children and families. Fathers play a significant role in their child's development and emotional well-being but risk adverse narratives fuelled by the media and mothers claiming fathers "don't care" are contributing to poor outcomes for children.

Offering evidence-based support with only one parent and their child is unlikely to be effective when there is ongoing poorly resolved conflict between parents.

Target Audience

We targeted this programme to everyone who work together to safeguard children or who works directly with families. So far, we have had participants from children's services, schools, health, mental health and the voluntary sector.

Learning Objectives

By attending this one-day programme, practitioners will overcome their own fears by engaging with both parents and support fathers to make positive changes to support their children by:

- Approaching the conflict through a Trauma Lens
- Exploring the complexities of relationships and the language and judgements around this – e.g. men as perpetrators/women as victims
- Educating mothers about the benefits of involving fathers
- Incorporating the fathers' strengths
- Linking thoughts and feelings to behaviour
- Empowering practitioners to explore their own beliefs
- Supporting fathers to understand how unresolved trauma and ACEs informs current behaviours
- Promoting effective communication between fathers and their children



4. Responding to “Child to Parent Conflict” (one day programme with toolkit)

Practitioners are becoming overwhelmed with the significant rise in referrals involving child to parent conflict (*Dr Caroline Miles, University of Manchester and Rachel Condry, Professor of Criminology, Oxford 2020*)

The number of child-on-parent episodes during the pandemic increased by:

- 70% in families
- 69% of practitioners saw an increase in referrals
- 64% of practitioners said the severity of violence had increased

Learning Objectives

By attending this workshop, practitioners can work more confidently with families where there is ongoing poorly resolved conflict between the parent and child by:

- Identifying the different types of conflict
- Encouraging parents to be aware of their own emotions
- Exploring the underlying behaviours resulting in the conflict
- Supporting parents to set clear boundaries
- Gaining the child’s perspective of how the conflict is affecting them.
- Supporting parents to identify their child’s emotions
- Turning conflict into communication

5. Modules 1 to 4 Reducing Parental Conflict (DWP Programme)

Each module is a half-day session with a full day session consisting of a choice of 2 modules. Modules 2 and 3 are recommended as an effective one-day programme for frontline practitioners.

Module 1: Understanding the parental conflict evidence-base

An introductory session that explores the research findings with emphasis on the negative impact on outcomes for children.

Module 2: Recognising and supporting parents in conflict

Focusing on the causes of parental conflict, this workshop equips practitioners with the skills to work with parents to identify and explore relationship conflict.



Module 3. Working With Parents in Conflict: How to support, refer or intervene?

This module explores how to discuss parental conflict with parents. It focuses on practising the skills of handling conversations with parents in conflict using tools and techniques to enable parents to resolve destructive conflict with positive outcomes.

Module 4: The role of supervisors and managers in managing people to address parental conflict

This module is for those with managerial or supervisory responsibility for front line practitioners who work in a range of organisations. The module is designed as a skills-based workshop exploring the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to support staff to identify, intervene or escalate parental conflict situations they encounter. ***Participants should attend Modules 1 to 3 in advance to gain sound knowledge of the Reducing Parental Conflict programme***

6. Cultural Humility and Ethnographic Interviewing

We have developed this programme to cover **cultural humility** and **ethnographic interviewing** for practitioners working with children and families. We collaborated with families and caseworkers involved in child protection and care proceedings in Children's Services to make this course relevant. It responds to the difficulties practitioners encounters in their work with an ever-changing diversity of clients.

How can the practitioner gather information, assess, analyse, and respond to the problems facing families whose backgrounds, lives and lived experiences are significantly different? How do you determine what questions to ask? Once you know what to ask, how do you ask them? What's the plan? How will you decide what to put in the plan?

The problems can be complex, with differing views and standards about acceptable parenting strategies; however, we need to get it right for vulnerable children as the stakes are high when assessing the risk of harm.

Target Audience

Originally, we created this programme for social workers but it suitable for all practitioners working with children and their families.

Learning Objectives



We aim to deliver a programme to ensure practitioners develop skills and techniques appropriate to improving culturally competent practice. By attending this one-day programme, you should be able to:

Knowledge

- Identify how culture influences identifying the problem, seeking support and accessing services.
- Recognise and discuss the influence of culture on the communication between workers and families and understand how to accommodate different communication styles
- Define **ethnography** the context of safeguarding, permanence, welfare, and cultural humility.
- Identify the goals, strategy, and methods of ethnographic interviewing relating to cultural humility.

Skill

- Using a safeguarding scenario and ethnographic interviewing approaches, obtain culturally specific details relating to child safety from family members.
- Using an assessment case scenario, construct at least four ethnographic interview questions to obtain cultural information and perspective.

Values

Participants will:

- Commit to uncovering biases, practising self-correction, using reflection in action as part of their practice.
- Commit to understanding and recognising how personal beliefs, values, norms, and world views can influence case decisions and outcomes for children and families.
- Use a culturally responsive approach to engage, assess and support family relationships, safety concerns and children's welfare.
- Collaborate with families using culturally responsive strategies to engage, problem-solve to promote children's safety, permanency, and welfare.



PART TWO

INTERVENTIONS

Our approach

We do not deliver interventions directly as workshops or to parents. Instead, we train practitioners to deliver the programmes to colleagues and directly to parents, either as workshops or working with them one-to-one. We recommend two days for each of the programmes.

1. Co-parenting Without Conflict'

This is an innovative and unique offer that gives you access to tools when working with parents, measure outcomes and change. The intervention undertaken is with co-parenting couples or with groups of parents. It can be either through support sessions or workshops. Our trainers facilitate our 'Train the Trainer' programme to enable participants to deliver the intervention.

It is designed in a way that enables trainers to host bite-size skills development workshops. It includes our toolkit and guide . We offer the option of customising and branding the tools, so practitioners have access to print on demand.

What gets measured gets done, so if you want to measure your outcomes, we can offer you unlimited access to our [Theory of Change Logic model](#) or replicate our model for your organisation's use.

The programme encourages parents to understand the impact of parental conflict on their children by viewing things from the child's perspective. The aims and outcomes of the programme are, but are not limited to:

- educating parents about conflict and the negative behaviours that promote and escalate the co-parenting conflict;



- teaching parents practical conflict resolution skills to promote positive change in the co-parenting relationship and reduce the adverse impact of parental conflict on their children;
- guide parents to improve how they communicate and reduce the opportunities for conflict;
- guide parents to establish or re-establish a child-centred approach to co-parenting or shared parenting;
- making sure the child's voice is inherent in the intervention;
- work with parents on strategies, and develop a plan to implement and sustain change.

2. Train the Trainer - Getting it Right for Our Children

The programme is in two parts which can be used as separate interventions. Some parents may need either one or both. They can be delivered either through workshops or directly to parents. Workshops should be no longer than 4 hours, and one-one could be about 2 hours.

Part One:

The session is designed for parents who do not fully understand parental conflict and the concerns.

- What is conflict?
- How parental conflict affects children
- Why conflict management is vital for families
- Managing and resolving conflict
- Protecting children when you are resolving conflict
- Getting support to manage the conflict

Part Two:

The intervention is for parents who understand that there is parent conflict and it affects their child negatively. The programme focuses on:

- The importance of co-parenting from the child's perspective
- Practical issues of staying involved in the child's life
- Working with parents to develop a workable co-parenting plan
- Sustaining the co-parenting plan



3. Train the Trainer - Reduce Parental Conflict Using Motivational Interviewing Techniques

We usually deliver this as a training programme focusing on working with domestic abuse. We have adapted the programme to respond to parental conflict.

We know that parental conflict is exceptionally harmful to children and can quickly escalate if it is not resolved and managed appropriately. We have used our knowledge of motivational interviewing, family trauma, and the family safeguarding model to create an evidence-based programme for practitioners working with families experiencing parental conflict, excluding domestic abuse.

Our two-day programme uses real cases to allow participants to explore the causes of parental conflict and acquire **motivational interviewing** knowledge, skills, and techniques to help parents change problematic behaviours. The programme is person-child-centred as the primary aim is to improve outcomes for children and their families.

Target Audience

Initially developed for Early Help Practitioners and Family Workers, practitioners from other services could benefit from attending. We have delivered the programme to Social Workers and others named in the Statutory Guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Learning Objectives

Knowledge

- Understand the difference between parental conflict and domestic abuse to ensure the correct response (local authority threshold criteria)
- Understanding destructive parental conflict and parental relationship distress at an early stage
- Develop an understanding of how conflict escalates in the parental relationship
- Understanding how trauma and intersectionality/diversity concerns affect a person's experience and their capacity to change
- Acquire a working knowledge of the domains of a trauma-informed social work family assessment
- Acquire knowledge of motivational interviewing and the cycle of change



Skills

- Apply a range of assessment tools
- Apply motivational interviewing when working with parents experiencing conflict
- Use motivational interviewing strategies to de-escalate parental conflict
- Use motivational interviewing to work with parents through the stages
- Develop a collaborative SMART plan to support parents focusing on positive outcomes for children

Values

- Intervene early, listen to parents and offer help
- Always be aware of how our own beliefs, experience and attitudes might influence professional involvement and take action to avoid this
- Ensure the perspectives of each family member remain central while effectively safeguarding children and discharging our professional duties
- Be confident in working with parental conflict without bias while reinforcing the rights of children experiencing parental conflict and providing support for children and adults.

4. Train the Trainer - Supporting Parents to Co-Parent Without Conflict

The programme is designed for practitioners to support parents and can be tailored to be delivered to parents. It focuses on **interpersonal conflict and conflict types** and the **behaviours and responses** that increase escalation.

The aims and outcomes of the programme are, but are not limited to:

- knowledge and understanding of different conflict types;
- knowledge and understanding of conflictive behaviours that increase parental conflict and escalate and become difficult to resolve (conflict escalator tool)
- knowledge and understanding of crucial conflict resolution strategies to support parents to make change;



- using a range of **critical skills to intervene** and support parents to reduce the adverse impact of parental conflict on their children embedding equality and diversity into everyday practise (optional), including engaging with fathers.

For pricing and other enquiries please email:
elaine@maydayvs.co.uk