

ENDING FEAR AND FINDING FUN IN FAMILIES AFTER CHILD TO PARENT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Responding to Domestic Abuse in Ireland, North and South IASW & BASW NI Conference, Fairways Hotel, Dundalk 29-02-2024

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OUTLINE – "WHAT IS NOT UNDERSTOOD CANNOT BE ADDRESSED"

- What is the problem?
- How can we tell the difference?
- What do we know about the problem?
- Is this a Human Rights issue?

- Non Violent Resistance as an ecological & systemic response to abusive/ controlling and sometimes violent behaviour of some young people?
- Questions/ Comments

CONTEXTS...







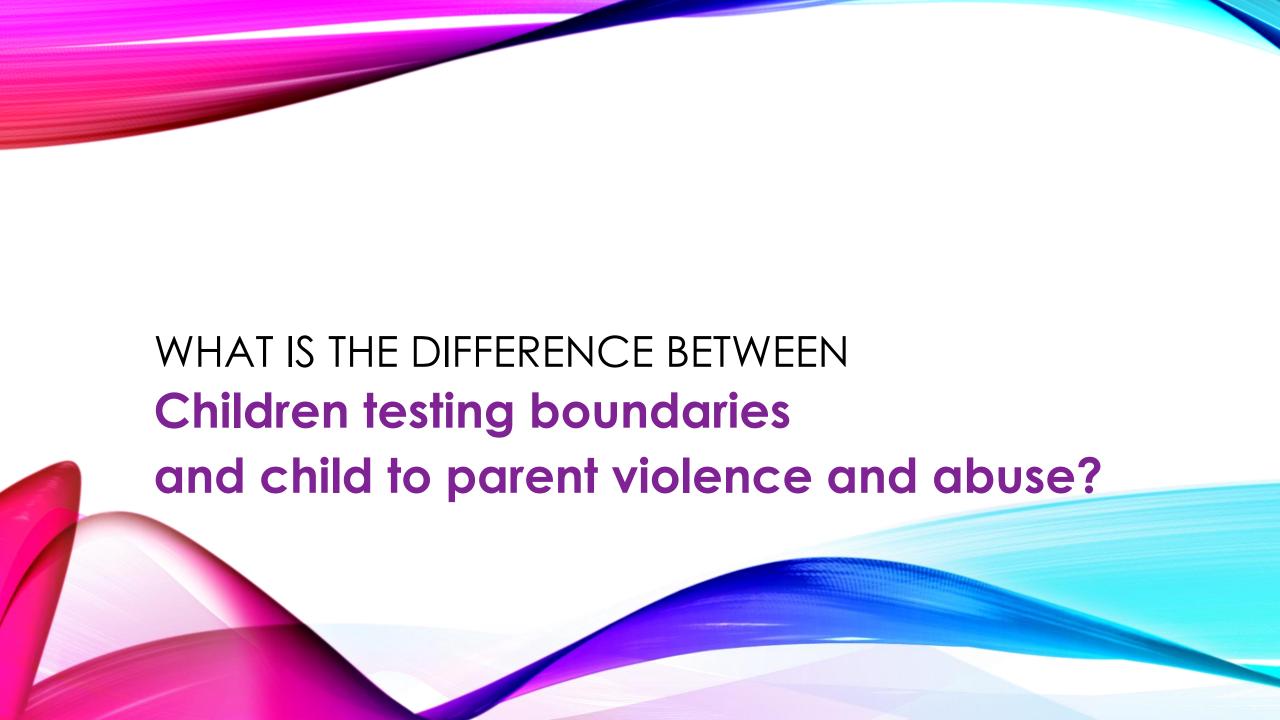
- First encounters with the kinds of abusive & violent behaviour we're talking about.....
- How can we respond to abusive/ controlling/ self-destructive behaviour of a son/ daughter aged 18 years or younger?



CASE EXAMPLE: NOT AVAILABLE ON HANDOUTS

- Different definitions are used....
- The problem often starts with verbal abuse and escalates to emotional and physical abuse
- (Shanholtz et al 2020)
- Is this a type of DV?
- Talking about these problems is difficult for practitioners who seek to counteract demonisation of young people (Selwyn & Meakings, 2016)

- Let's start with suggesting a clear definition of child to parent violence and abuse....
- We're talking about an abuse of power through which a child coerces, controls or dominates parents*/ carers*
 - Also known as child to parent violence/ abuse
 - This can be but is not necessarily intentional
 - See Butler et al 2021; 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.



A CLEAR DEFINITION? IT INVOLVES FEAR & ABUSE OF POWER...

- The issues of <u>power</u> and <u>fear</u> clarify the difference.
- If parents feel they <u>must adapt their behaviour</u> 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; Kelly & Coogan 2020; Butler et al 2021).

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CHILD TO PARENT VIOLENCE & ABUSE IN IRELAND?



- Throughout Ireland, people working with children and families (e.g. Tusla, CAMHS) are hearing more and more about CPVA in their work (McMahon, 2013; O'Rourke, 2014; Lauster et al, 2014, Coogan, 2016a; Coogan 2018; Kelly & Coogan 2020; Butler et al 2021; Hynes 2023)
- For Parentline, CPVA is the single largest reason for parents contacting the service. (O' Reilly, 2016; Wayman 2021; Hickie, 2021, 2023)

CPVA AS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE?



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- 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)

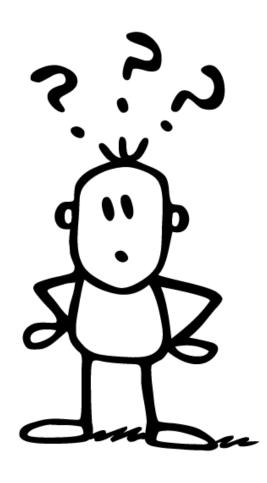


CPVA AS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

- Child to parent violence and abuse infringes the rights of parents/ carers and of children.
- Our challenge is to take a clear position against these problems (<u>not against the child</u>) and to restore hope and confidence.
- This empowers and supports people to change.



PAUSE POINT....REVIEW & WHAT IS NEXT?



- What is the problem?
- How can we tell the difference?
- CPVA in Ireland?
- Human Rights?
- How can we understand and respond to CPVA?
- Non Violent Resistance as a systemic response?
- Case example what happened next?
- Questions/ Comments

HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO ABUSIVE, COERCIVE AND/ OR SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR?

HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO ABUSIVE, COERCIVE AND/ OR SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR? (SEE ALSO WEI ET AL 2020)

- The use of abusive and violent behaviour is rooted in the interaction of biological, social, cultural and other backgrounds factors
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) suggests using the ecological model when trying to understand and respond to abusive and violent behaviour
- The ecological model supports a multidimensional approach to identifying the reciprocal inter-connected risk factors of abusive and violent behaviour at 4 levels –
- individual,
- relationship,
- community and
- society

HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND AND RESPOND TO ABUSIVE, COERCIVE AND/ OR SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR? (SEE ALSO WEI ET AL 2020)

- Individual factors = what are the biological and personality factors that affect an individual's behaviour?
- Relationship factors = what are the factors within their relationships that increase or decrease risk of violence?
- Community level factors = what is it about an individual's social and community contexts that increase or decrease risk of violence?
- Society level factors = what is it about the society in which the person lives that increase or decrease risk of violence?

KEY QUESTIONS IN CHALLENGING ABUSIVE & VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

- How can we create and support families and communities where women, men, girls and boys can thrive and
- where no one is oppressed?
- Where the human rights of each person are fully respected?

- Critique/ challenge patriarchy institutionalised male dominance.
- Reject assumptions and practices that claim to control others, particularly those who do not conform to social norms.
- Reject tactics of control and violence that are part of systems of dominance and subordination.
- Promote alternative strategies for resolution of conflict
- Promote diversity in representations and expressions of genders and identity

ONE WAY OF ADDRESSING THESE CHALLENGES Non Violent Resistance in Ireland

HOW DO WE BEGIN TO RESPOND TO THESE CHALLENGES IN IRELAND?

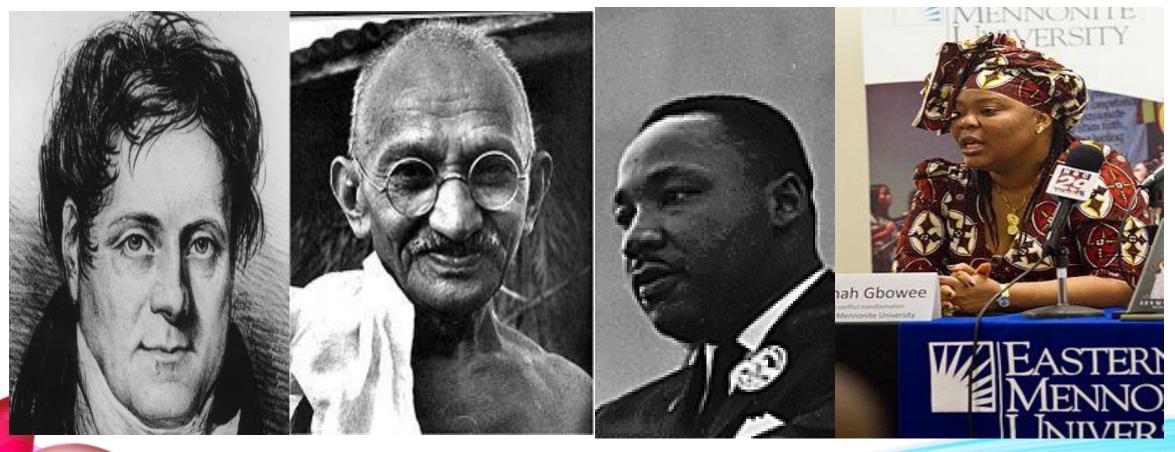
- Name the problem CPVA is an abuse of power involving coercion and controlling behaviour
- CPVA is a human rights issue.
- "Explanations, even good ones, are not excuses"
 - (See Gallagher, E 2004b; Coogan & Lauster 2021)).
- "The idea that any behaviour is inevitable,
- uncontrollable,
- or excusable by gender,
- diagnosis or past experience
- is simplistic, discriminatory and unhelpful." (Gallagher, E 2004b; Butler et al 2021).

HOW DO WE BEGIN?

- A zero tolerance towards the use of any and all abusive and/ or violent behaviour by anyone
- Understanding does not mean accepting abuse/ violence.

WHAT IS THE NON VIOLENT RESISTANCE MODEL OF INTERVENTION?





NVR for families emerges from a commitment to non violence & resistance (Omer, 2004; 2011)

Daniel O'Connell (Ireland) Mahatma Gandhi (India), Marrin Luther King (US) & Leymah Gbowee (Liberia).

NON VIOLENT RESISTANCE (NVR) (OMER 2004; 2011; COOGAN 2018; KELLY & COOGAN 2020; BECKERS ET AL 2022).

- It is a relatively brief systemic approach, working through parents/ carers as agents of change.
- Non violent resistance aims at giving the child a clear message
 - "I am your parent. I am no longer going to put up with this situation and I will do all in my power to change it except by attacking you verbally or physically".
- Parents/ carers take a firm stance against any violence, risk taking or anti-social behaviours.
- Parents/ carers commit to avoiding all physical or verbal attacks.

NON VIOLENT RESISTANCE (BECKERS ET AL 2022)

- As a <u>trans-diagnostic approach</u>, NVR changes interaction patterns involving harmful, abusive or self-destructive behaviour of children
- The adults involved change their interactions with the child
- Chosen by the parent(s), the support network in showing concern and protest against repeated incidents of harmful or self-destructive behaviour.
- A growing evidence base includes RCTs for externalising behaviours (Wienblatt & Omer 2008), repeated patterns of physical violence against parents, carers, siblings (Ollefs et al 2009), children in foster care (Van Holen et al 2017)

NON VIOLENCE RESISTANCE – A DIFFERENT FORM OF FIGHTING.

- NVR is a form of fighting a different kind of fight:
 - (1) Parents/carers commit to a non violent and non humiliating stance.
 - (2) Parents/carers take responsibility for their own part in escalation (and de-escalation).
 - (3) The goal of the fight is to resist, persist and to prevent violence.
 - (4) Parents/carers *increase their presence* in their child's life.

NVR – A DIFFERENT FORM OF FIGHTING.

- (5) Parents/carers **build a support network** to help the family resist violence.
- (6) Parents/carers fight & resist any violence while reinforcing and drawing out positive elements in the relationship with their child.
- (7) NVR rebuilds parents/carers confidence and competence without becoming punitive and authoritarian.
- (8) The child is invited to come up with solutions to the problems of aggressive and violent behaviours.

CASE EXAMPLE - NOT AVAILABLE ON HANDOUTS

REVIEW AND QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS?

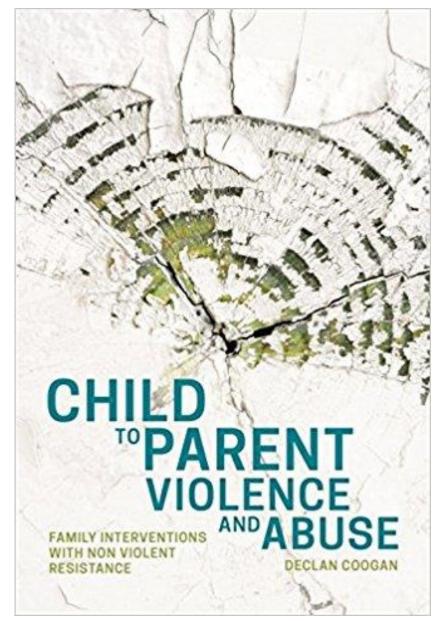


- Where do we start?
- CPVA as an abuse of power and as a human rights issue
 - there is <u>no excuse</u> for abuse
- NVR as a relatively brief systemic response to abusive/violent behaviour.
- Parent/ carers as agents of change with NVR mentoring & support.
- Please turn to the person next to you and discuss:
- What one idea stands out for you?
- What questions do you have?



- Paperback book available at <u>www.jkp.com</u>
- Some useful resources: www.nvrireland.ie and also www.newauthorityparenting.ie and www.parentline.ie
 - My email?

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