

# "IN THE LOOP" VOL. 3 | NOVEMBER 2021

# RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

THE NORTH EAST'S REDUCING PARENTAL CONFLICT PROGRAMME (RPCP)



## KEY MESSAGES

Welcome to the third monthly bulletin for Front Line Practitioners

- We want to motivate parents to say "YES."
- We want parents to be **CONFIDENT** about taking part.
- We want parents to **TRUST** us.

Over the summer, all providers and the Gateway put their heads together to devise three important messages we want to get across to parents at the very early stages of their involvement with Relationships Matter.

To achieve the three outcomes featured left, we should all:

Help parents say "Yes.": **Emphasise the benefits.** They've probably tried everything, but this is different, and it really works.

Build confidence: Let parents know the interventions are **tried and tested.** Give real examples of parents who have benefited already.

Build trust: Let them know **it's worth a try!** We are here to *listen* and work on the *strengths* of both parents.

## SUPPORTING YOU AT THE GATEWAY

By Jackie Liddell

It is really encouraging that the Relationships Matter Referral Gateway is as busy as ever with referrals from our frontline practitioners across the North East Region. We have certainly come along way since May 2019, and thank you to all of you who have helped parents by referring them to us (all 450 of you!).

Together with you and our providers, we have shared the practice and learning which has enabled us to improve the referral process, and strengthen access for parents to our four pathways of support.

As Gateway Support Worker, I provide eligibility advice, and assistance with the referral process to practitioners right across the region, and I provide support to parents who are unsure as to how we can help them in their individual circumstances. This can be something as simple as talking with them in a little more detail about the support we have on offer, or by reducing any fears or barriers they may have.

As part of our collaborative experience and learning, I often step in as frontline practitioner myself, especially in circumstances where the original referrer is unable to continue to support the parents through the intervention process. We have learned that continued support reduces the likelihood of parents disengaging from the programme before completion.

We continue to work hard in relation to promoting the sharing of information with our partners, providers and practitioners. Failure to do this adequately can be the difference between a successful referral or a referral that does not meet the eligibility criteria.

I have found that frontline practitioners like yourselves are excellent at providing The Gateway with as much information about the parents themselves, as well as details of the disharmony or conflict within the relationship.

You may notice that we now ask, “**Why now?**” which I think is important as it is an honest



Jackie Liddell is the Referral Gateway Support Worker

reflection of what the parent and practitioner thinks and feels about the relationship, and it gives us an opportunity to document any changes or goals the parents want to work towards. It also helps us to provide the most relevant support in order to help them make positive changes within the parental relationship to improve the outcomes for their children.

If you are a practitioner working directly with families where parental conflict is making progress difficult, we will do everything we can to support you to make the referral, so the Relationships Matter Programme can continue to be a significant part of the solution.

“ Thank you to every single front line practitioner who has referred onto the Relationships Matter Programme. If you have any questions, simply pick up the phone or send us an email. Our details are on the back page. ”

# One family's experience of the FAMILY CHECK UP Intervention

*This case study has been anonymized.*

**Parents Dougie and Julie have a 14 year old daughter, Stacey. They were referred to Relationships Matter by Stacey's Support Worker at school. Both parents were struggling to manage Stacey's behaviour and this was impacting on their relationship. The Support Worker was helping Dougie and Julie keep Stacey in school and prevent an escalation to Children's Social Care.**

At the time of the referral Stacey said that she was embarrassed by her parents and that them being older parents made her unhappy. Dougie and Julie couldn't agree how to best parent her and they were on the brink of splitting up due to the stress of this.

**Family Check Up** was delivered weekly. The family intervention task (they chose to plan a day out together after lockdown) illustrated difficulties for Julie in speaking up and giving her view and demonstrated that Dad, Dougie, was stricter with Stacey than Julie was, and his daughter's behaviour angered him. It also showed that both of them found it hard to praise Stacey.

It became apparent during our discussions that mum, Julie, lacked confidence and felt intimidated by Stacey. This left her feeling overwhelmed at times in her role as Mum. We worked on how Julie could ask Stacey to do tasks/chores, and how Dougie could manage his feelings of anger more effectively.

In another session, Julie reflected that when Stacey had asked her 'What is good about me, Mum?', that she had struggled to answer Stacey.



Stacey was included at the end of the session and each family member was asked to pick 3 positive words to describe someone else. This helped Julie and Dougie focus on how they can praise Stacey and helped everyone feel appreciated for what they bring to the family. Dougie and Julie felt really valued by hearing Stacey praise them too.

Other topics covered were Rewards and Consequences for Stacey's behaviour and Active Listening for the whole family. Dougie and Julie got a lot out of the practice session around Active Listening and it helped them look at their own and each other's behaviours. Julie recognised that if Stacey is being demanding, she tends to rush into decisions that she is not completely comfortable with. The Relate Worker and Julie talked about her taking more time in these situations and looked at what she can say to herself, so she is not making decisions straight away.

A Family Meeting was planned. The Worker included Stacey in the planning of this to get her ideas about what she would like to talk about. Throughout the Family Meeting, Stacey engaged very well and she came up with some sensible suggestions for rules e.g. after lockdown she must be in the house by 8pm and if she is late her phone is taken off her. Julie found her voice in the meeting and was quite firm. The family drew up their family agreement and plan to review it in 3 weeks.

## What is different now?

Stacey said: *"I didn't mind the family meeting and I would do another one; everyone listened for once."*

Dougie said: *"It's been good to think ahead, so we are more prepared."*

Julie said: *"There's less arguments now and we are talking to each other in a tone where you don't feel anybody is criticising."*

Stacey's Support Worker said: *"I have spoken to Mam and she feels the intervention has been good at helping them improve parenting. Stacey seemed calmer on her return to school (after lockdown)."*

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO ATTENDED OUR WEBINAR ON 1ST NOVEMBER.  
THE WEBINAR FOCUSED ON THE NEW INCREDIBLE YEARS ADVANCED PROGRAMME.

There were some great questions, so here are the answers for those who might have missed the end:

Q: *Could this intervention help with parents struggling an autistic child?*

A: Yes, absolutely. In face the Incredible Years is one of the best interventions for parents with children with special needs.

Q: *Are these sessions still done with groups or on a 1-2-1 basis?*

A: They can be either. If there are enough people for group, we could run a group, but most are currently doing the intervention as a couple 1-2-1.

Q: *Is the delivery content on the IY website, or do we need to buy the new material?*

A: There are some example clips on the website, but you need to be trained in the intervention to purchase them.

Q: *Do we need additional training to run the sessions?*

A: You will need the existing IY qualification, and you need to have run the basic before you can run advanced. This hasn't changed. There is no additional training needed to run the modified advanced (but this is only available to RPC at the moment).

Q: *How are families referred to the service?*

A: Just see below!

Q: *Is there a charge for parents who work?*

A: No, the service is free to everyone.

Q: *Is there a large waiting list?*

A: Only for those who want to do Parenting When Separated, as we won't be running any more after the current course until January 2022. We contact parents within five days of the funder approving the referral, and aim to have them start the intervention within 25 working days.



If you are interested in finding out more, you can watch the recording [here](#). Please note that due to copyright issues, we are unable to show the vignettes publicly.

You can find out more about the Relationships Matter Programme in this [five-minute video](#).

For information on how to refer parents, visit the Referral Gateway website [here](#).

Or

you can pick up the phone and we would be more than happy to discuss the family who might benefit:

Referral Gateway Coordinator, Gemma Ozap-Marshall, 0191 433 3355 / 07860 735990

Referral Gateway Support Worker, Jackie Liddell, 07874 884996

Email addresses are:

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*The Relationships Matter interventions are delivered in the North East by Relate, Changing Futures North East (in the Tees Valley), and Action for Children Ltd, and is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions.*