

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

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



THE GATEWAY REMAINS OPEN FOR

REFERRALS

Gemma and Jackie are still taking referrals onto the Relationships Matter programme right up until 16th March. Parents can remain on the programme until 29th July, so there is plenty time to make sure parents can complete before provision from Relationships Matter finishes.

Contact details are on the last page, and we are very happy to answer any questions you may have.

**Welcome to the sixth monthly
bulletin for Front Line Practitioners**

**420 PARENTS HAVE
COMPLETED AN
INTERVENTION**

*And there is still room for
more!*

Relationships Matter



FROM THE FRONT LINE



Adam Dickinson, Senior Practitioner, RPC Relate

As March draws closer, meaning our referral window is coming to an end, I have found myself reflecting on the incredible impact this programme has had on families in the North East.

Prior to joining the RPC team at Relate, I worked in the education sector for over twelve years, where I often found myself wondering where to direct parents who came to me to discuss how much they were struggling as a family, and how they would do anything to make things better for their children. We knew how to support children, but this often left the parents trying to navigate what was

happening outside of school themselves, which in turn impacted on the children's school experience. It manifested in behavioural issues, emotional outbursts and had a huge impact of their confidence and feelings of self-worth. It was a cycle I was keen to address.

Why are children carrying the weight of their parent's conflict on their shoulders?

The answer, of course, is that they shouldn't. Clearly, there was a gap in support for parents in terms of how they manage their relationship with each other, the type of support that would benefit the children we worked with daily. I then came across the Reducing Parental Conflict programme, and the more I read, the more I realised that this was what I had been looking for all these years: a programme that acknowledges the conflict and issues that most parents experience, but which gives those parents who struggle more than most the tools to manage this, and work towards a better future for their children.

I thought, "*This is too good to be true!*" when I first joined the Relate team, but the more

families I worked with, sharing their journey from beginning to end, I started to see how beneficial this work is, especially when I hear first-hand the difference in children's behaviour, confidence and emotional wellbeing. I found myself fully immersed in the interventions, such as MBT and Parenting When Separated, and witnessed parents change their language from talking about themselves to bringing their children to the forefront of everything. Moreover, the child's voice really came through in the parents' feedback. These were true eureka! moments for me, which I will carry with me in whatever roles I undertake in the future.

We have been fortunate to work with a wide variety of Front Line Practitioners who understand the families and the support we offer at Relationships Matter.

You have been instrumental in the success of the programme and the impact it has had on families in need. Thank you.

“ So, with the Referral Gateway closing its doors mid-March, I would really encourage getting those referrals in while you can, to hopefully make a huge positive difference to children's futures. ”

One Family's Experience of The Incredible Years Advanced*

**People and place names have been anonymised.*

Becci and Rob have 3 children - Eve 8, Ben 11 and Jacob 14 – and they recently moved to County Durham. Mam Becci's brother died suddenly, and she wanted to move out of the area the family were living in. The Police were contacted following an argument between the couple that escalated significantly, leaving the children feeling upset and worried. This triggered a referral to Children's Social Care, and the team there began supporting the family on a Child in Need assessment.

The children shared with professionals that they felt sad that their uncle had died and also that, since then, their parents had done nothing but argue. The voice of the child in relation to the impact of the parental conflict was overwhelming, and Social Services decided to progress to conference to try and minimise the emotional impact on the children if they did not intervene now. Whilst Becci suffered from depression and was struggling to manage her grief following the death of her brother, she had started accessing her own bereavement support, and the Front Line Practitioner felt this was an appropriate time to refer the couple to Relationships Matter for help with their conflict.

Rob & Becci signed up to the Incredible Years Advanced via Teams. They both struggled to engage initially, and they had around 13 no-shows or cancelled sessions. The Relationships Matter worker kept in touch with them both and encouraged them to attend, organising sessions each week regardless. We began to doubt whether the couple would complete the programme, so we spoke to the Front Line Practitioner. Between the FLP and the worker, Becci and Rob were encouraged to attend sessions, and once they got started they had a complete change of mind.

The Incredible Years Advanced sessions began with the couple looking at active listening. Immediately, they fed back that they were applying the strategies learned and that they had started to listen to each other more. As well as looking at how they communicated with each other, they also learned how to communicate more positively with the children; listening to them more, showing empathy and understanding and helping them to problem solve.



After seeing how this was helping their relationship, they started to come to sessions regularly. It was agreed we could run 2 sessions a week to help them complete sooner and in time for the conference.

Becci & Rob said the sessions really encouraged them to think more about how they communicate with one another. Rob said he doesn't butt in as often now when Becci is talking, and he tends to wait and listen to her. Becci said they both try and validate each other's feelings, as well as being aware of making eye contact when one person is talking, rather than being distracted on their phones or watching TV. They concluded that they enjoyed the sessions and found them really helpful. The referring social worker and FLP also saw a huge improvement, and the children fed back that there are no arguments any more.

“ My observations at the home are always positive, and I no longer have any worries. ”

Front Line Practitioner & Social Worker

We can work with parents until 29th July 2022

Want to know more about
Relationships Matter?
Visit Relate's website [here](#).

For information on how to **REFER PARENTS**, visit the Referral Gateway website [here](#),
or watch [THIS TEN MINUTE VIDEO](#)

You can also give parents the link to this [FIVE MINUTE VIDEO](#) to give them more
information.

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 funded by the Department for Work and Pensions