

# "IN THE LOOP" VOL. 1 | SEPTEMBER 2021

# RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

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



Welcome to the first monthly bulletin  
for Front Line Practitioners

## HOLD THE DATE!

We will be hosting a webinar on  
Tuesday, 2nd November, 11.00 a.m.  
This will have a focus on THE  
INCREDIBLE YEARS intervention.



Relationships Matter

## ACHIEVEMENTS:

- 350 parents have completed an intervention.
- 83% of parents who completed the post assessment questionnaire say they are happier in their relationship.
- Happier mams and dads means happier, healthier children.
- Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, we have continued to work with parents digitally, via Zoom and Microsoft Teams. We have tablets we can loan to parents who do not have access to a suitable device.
- More than 150 Front Line Practitioners have referred parents onto the programme.

## The Gateway @ Gateshead

All referrals to the programme come through the Gateway. We said a sad farewell to Kim Kyle earlier this year. Kim was with the programme from the very beginning, but has not gone far. She is now the DWP's Regional Integration Lead for the North East and North Yorkshire, and she is still very much involved.

Gemma Ozap is now leading the Gateway, and joins us from Durham Council, where she was a Front Line Practitioner referring parents onto the programme. So Gemma already knows the programme really well and is doing an amazing job.

We also welcome Jackie Liddell, who has taken the role of Gateway Support Worker. She too knows the programme inside out, having delivered RPCP interventions for the past two years.

### Meet Gemma (right)

Gemma is passionate about healthy relationships and supporting those who care for children and young people, and encouraging children and young people to use their voice, share their story and follow their dreams.

Forever a foreign holiday lover and outdoor walks with her crazy Sprocker-Spaniel!



Gemma Ozap- Referral Gateway Coordinator



Jackie Liddell- Support Worker

### Meet Jackie (left)

Jackie is hugely committed to the Reducing Parental Conflict Programme, believing it adds real value to the Parental and Couple Relationship. She finds it a privilege to be a part of the positive changes that the programme has on parents' lives, and the positive impact it has on the children.

As a married mother of three boys, she's pretty busy, but loves to walk her lovely but lazy Golden Retriever in between the chaos.

## View from the Front Line

*Amy Martin, Gateshead Early Help Duty Team*

“

Often when conflict in a relationship has been identified by our service, the family aren't always ready to accept this. I've found that the process of completing the questionnaires for the Relationships Matter Programme is a really useful vehicle for this. Often just considering the questions can be a real turning point for a parent.

The knowledge and support of the Gateway on what interventions are suitable, and how relevant they will be for parents, means the family can be reassured that the intervention they receive will be tailored to what they have identified as relevant, and therefore worth their investment and commitment.

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# One family's experience of the Incredible Years Intervention

*This case study has been anonymized.*

Faye and Peter were referred to Relationships Matter by their social worker, who was concerned that the relationship difficulties between them were impacting negatively on the children. They have a 3 year old son together called Jonnie, who is diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and Faye also has two older boys aged 7 and 15.

They both decided the Incredible Years (IY) would be the most suitable intervention. With a tablet loaned to them by Relate, they started it together during the first Covid-19 lockdown. But, after an incident at home, where Peter threatened one of Faye's older boys, Peter moved out of the family home and had supervised access visits with Jonnie.

Faye struggled with anxiety during lockdown and found Jonnie's behaviour very challenging. But she fully engaged with the IY worker, having lost most of the support she was used to from the Autism Hub. Faye focused on the children's individual needs and, as a result, was able to find time for positive and imaginative play with all of her children during lockdown.

Specifically the Incredible Years sessions helped her to think about how she could help Jonnie's social development and prepare him for starting nursery. As part of this she practiced social coaching in her play with him. She has worked hard to establish family rules and routines to make life more organised and predictable for everyone; she now uses a lot of praise with the children and feels everyone in the house is calmer.

As Mum worked through the Incredible Years Advanced Programme, her confidence in herself noticeably increased. She found the sessions on problem-solving with other adults very useful as it gave her the chance to pre-script and practise conversations. As a result, she was better able to talk with Jonnie's nursery about his needs related to his ASD and now works closely with them to create consistency between home and nursery.

Initially, Dad, Peter, did not engage as well as hoped so the worker offered flexible sessions around his shift patterns. By session 4 he said he got a lot out of Incredible Years Programme, as it helped him prepare for his contact with Jonnie.

Peter really wanted to learn about how to try and prevent meltdowns for Jonnie. The IY worker was able to provide specific information around ASD that may help Jonnie calm down, and how to reduce noise so that Jonnie is not overwhelmed. Peter now has a better understanding of Jonnie's sensory needs, the triggers for him getting over stimulated and how to recognise the signs for this. He now has a better appreciation of why life needs to be predictable for Jonnie and the importance of routines for him.



By session 6 he said he could see that criticising Faye was pointless; that she had moved on, and it wasn't good for Jonnie to hear nasty comments about his Mam, and Faye said that Peter was being more pleasant when he came to pick Jonnie up, so Jonnie was not exposed to the conflict between them at handovers.

Like Faye, Peter was able to focus on how he could manage Jonnie's difficult behaviour; for example when Jonnie started to scratch people, he was able to address this calmly, and described how he would move Jonnie to a quiet room.

## What is different now?

*Faye says, "I feel the whole house has had a dark cloud lifted off it, I have confidence now and know my children are so much happier." "I look forward to the sessions, it helps me be a strong parent and I feel you understand what I have been through."*

*Peter says, "I have learnt so much to help my son with you, I am looking forward to starting the next group, everyone should give this a go."*

*The children's Social Worker provided feedback, "I cannot believe how confident Mam is now! She has such good routines it's great, especially a bedtime routine for Jonnie. Mam has also really started caring for herself and has lost two stone in weight, she has more energy and her self esteem is so much better."*

*Jonnie's Family Support Worker from Nursery reported, "It has been so good to see Mam rebuild her life, she can pay Jonnie so much more attention now. We now hear from Dad too, it's wonderful that he has managed to do Incredible Years. I am surprised he did, and the benefit to their son Jonnie who has so many difficulties will really help him".*

WE ARE ACCEPTING REFERRALS UP TO THE 31 MARCH 2022

# HOW TO FIND OUT MORE



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, 0191 433 3355 / 07860 735990

Referral Gateway Support Worker, Jackie Liddell, 07874 884996

Email addresses are:

Gemma Ozap, Referral Gateway Coordinator - [GemmaOzap@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:GemmaOzap@gateshead.gov.uk)

Jackie Liddell, Referral Gateway Support Worker - [JackieLiddell@gateshead.gov.uk](mailto:JackieLiddell@gateshead.gov.uk)

*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.*

**relate**  
the relationship people

