

Walking on Eggshells

Parenting Programme Overview

This programme has been specifically designed for parents that are living with child to parent violence or extreme manipulative behaviour. It is a structured programme which is delivered over 8 x 2-hour sessions.

Session 1: Drawing a line in the sand

It is not unusual for parents who have been living with child to parent violence to find it difficult to quickly name clear and concrete goals other than a hope for it to be better. During the first session, the practitioner helps parents develop goals that are clear and specific, asks the parent about patterns of child to parent violence and discusses how parents responded to their child's provocative, violent or controlling behaviour. This initial session introduces the parent to new skills to help de-escalate situations and to interrupt cycles of escalation that may have developed over the years.

Session 2: The Support Network

This second session allows parents time to reflect on their thoughts and experience since the initial session and lays the foundation for identifying a support network. The session includes discussion around behaviour change and encourages parents to externalise the problem – the problem is the problem, not the child.

Session 3: Increased Parental Presence

One of the devastating consequences of child to parent violence on family relationships is that almost all interactions between parent and child become negative and filled with hostile intent. This session supports parents in increasing their parental presence through role play or in discussion about how they might increase their parental presence.

Session 4: The Announcement

The fourth session introduces the announcement. The facilitator will ensure all parents have committed to non-violence in their relationship with their child, understood how to avoid escalation and practised skills of de-escalation, increased their positive parental presence and put the support network in place before the announcement that violence at home will no longer be tolerated is made.

Session 5: Acts of Reconciliation

This session will discuss how the announcement was made and support parents who felt unable to make the announcement in small group role play in preparation for the announcement. If some parents did make the announcement the facilitator will explore how they did it. Acts of reconciliation will be introduced and their significance explored.

Section 6: Refusing Orders and Breaking Taboos

The concept of refusing orders will be explained and parents will gain an understanding of how this breaking of old patterns of parental behaviour can take place. It will be emphasised that this is not a punishment rather a recovery of parents' sense of self and authority and a breaking of unhelpful routine. This session also raises parents' awareness of the subtle and not so subtle methods of coercion that may have crept into their relationship with their child, where they feel powerless to resist or to refuse.

Session 7: The Sit-in

This session introduces the Sit In which demonstrates determined resistance, perseverance and a resolute commitment to non-violence. It can be a key moment in the change process for the child and for the parent. As with other elements of the programme the Sit-in is not a punishment. Like the other elements it signifies a clear break with habits of interaction in the past where perhaps parents had come to accept violent and controlling behaviour as part of family life.

Session 8: Moving Forward

The aim of this session is to re-affirm progress and commitment to new ways of relating, celebrate the achievements of all – parent, child and supporter in addressing the issues and develop a realistic plan for how any further difficulties might be resolved. Parents will be given information on any further support they may need with other issues.

**For further parenting support contact Parentline NI on
0808 8020 400 or visit www.ci-ni.org.uk/parentline/**