

Doncaster is working with thirteen other Local Authorities within Yorkshire and Humberside to jointly commission a regional website and digital campaign for practitioners and members of the public. The website can be accessed by visiting

**www.relationshipmatters.org.uk**

**What are we doing in Doncaster?**

We understand that conflict is an everyday part of life; our aim is to ensure that conflict is constructively resolved thereby modelling appropriate relationships where any differences are agreed amicably between adults.

The ambition in Doncaster is that families experiencing parental conflict are supported at the right time, by the right practitioner to prevent any impact of this conflict on children. We are aiming to increase awareness of parental conflict and the impact it can have on children and young people and their outcomes. In Doncaster, we are taking a practice approach through providing workforce development opportunities.

**What do we mean by parental conflict?**

In Doncaster, our behaviour is guided by relational practice and we are committed to helping families make choices and develop their own solutions to the challenges they face. This includes helping parents where there may be parental conflict.

Evidence shows that frequent, intense and poorly resolved parental conflict can have a negative impact on children’s mental health and long-term life-chances. Across Yorkshire and Humberside, we are referring to the Reducing Parental Conflict Programme as ‘Relationship Matters’.

Definition:

‘Parental Conflict can include regular bickering, arguing and frustration with each other about issues such as money, parenting or housework. When a child experiences this conflict frequently and it is unresolved, it could result in children feeling upset, confused or angry and affect their ability to resolve relationship problems throughout their lives and achieve positive outcomes’.

**Relationship Matters – Reducing Parental Conflict**

**May 2020**

**One-Minute Brief**





**Determining parental conflict or domestic abuse**

Often it is clearer to identify where domestic abuse is a concern. However, sometimes it can be more challenging to differentiate between parental conflict and domestic abuse.

Doncaster has adopted the Stefanou Foundation Intimate Relationship Spectrum (Appendix 1) to assist practitioners in determining whether families are experiencing parental conflict or domestic abuse. The spectrum includes the following relationship descriptions:

* Respectful, equal, cooperative, happy
* Mostly respectful, equal, cooperative but experiencing difficulties
* Conflictual, non- communicative, non-violent
* Frequent Abuse, which may include physical violence
* Frequent and Intense abuse, which may include physical harm, fear of violence/death

**Good practice would always support practitioners having a conversation with families to help them determine if they are experiencing parental conflict. If practitioners are in any doubt they should refer to their agency’s domestic abuse policy, or seek guidance from their line manager or from the Early Help Hub or the Domestic Abuse Hub.**

**Who should think about parental conflict?**

All practitioners working with families should think about parental conflict. This involves all the organisations, agencies and services working with adults, those working with children and young people, and those who work with families. This includes but is not limited to health services, the police, the third sector and local authority services.

A multi-agency and multi-disciplinary training programme is available for practitioners and managers working with children and families.

**What training is available?**

During Covid-19, training is available via e-learning. Please email [FamilyHubManagementTeam@doncaster.gov.uk](mailto:FamilyHubManagementTeam@doncaster.gov.uk) if you are interested in accessing this training.

Post Covid-19, classroom based training will be available on <http://buy.doncaster.gov.uk/>.

**Module 1**: Understanding Parental Conflict and its impact on Child Outcomes: How can I use the evidence base to support parent relationships?

**Module 2**: Recognising and Supporting Parents in Parental Conflict: Applying knowledge, skills and techniques

**Module 3**: Working with Parents in Conflict: How do I support, refer or intervene?

**Module 4**: Reducing Parental Conflict: The role of Supervisors and Managers: How can I support my frontline practitioners?