



Reducing Parental/Family Conflict - How to Argue Better (HTAB)

'Relationship Champion'
Training for Professionals



ROCHDALE
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Why we need to train all frontline practitioners to address family conflict

- Babies as young as six months exhibit higher physiological symptoms of distress such as elevated heart rate in response to overt, hostile exchanges between their parents when compared to exchanges between non-parental adults.
- In any given month over 90% of GPs see people with relationship problems making them to the most frequently turned to professionals for relationship support.
- More than 50% of children accessing mental health services do so because of 'family relationships problems' making this the single biggest presenting problem.
- Relationship distress is the strongest predictor of maternal psychological distress and increased rates of depression.
- Parenting programmes where there are relationship difficulties are ineffective unless the parental relationship is attended to first.
- People living with a troubled relationship are 3 times more likely to suffer from a mood disorder and twice as likely to misuse drugs or alcohol or both.
- 76% of all male prisoners in England and Wales had an absent father.

Introduction

How to argue better (HTAB) is an evidence based training programme for frontline practitioners designed to help them support families manage conflict between them and communicate in a less destructive way. This training equips practitioners with the knowledge and understanding of parental and family conflict, the causes of conflict, the difference between destructive and constructive conflict and importantly what impact this has on both adult and children's mental health.

The training enhances practitioners' skills and confidence to have 'relational' conversations with families. It provides a toolkit of activities and relationship insights that can be used to engage parents. We want to make sure that everyone is appropriately trained and ready to tackle some of the tricky conversations that are inevitable when we are talking about problems with our most intimate relationships.

Why is it needed?

The evidence is hard to ignore. Relate statistics tell us 20-25% of people are in a relationship that they would describe as distressed; that's a lot of people in struggling relationships and gives us some idea of the scale of the problem.

Relationships are at the heart of family functioning - how parents relate to each other affects the quality of all the relationships within the family home. Children learn from their parents modelling 'relational behaviours' such as how they cope (or not) with stressful situations, compromise, negotiation, problem solving and so on. These are the skills they take with them (or not) into the community, into school, into work and into their own relationships.

We know that when parents don't get along, negative parenting practices can become the norm (harsh, controlling, emotionally unavailable, blaming the child) and this has a significant impact on how children do at school. This emerging field of research means that we need to change the way we approach our work with families accordingly.

The role of fathers in family life (whether parents are still together or not) is also something the training encourages participants to consider. Dads are key to successful outcomes for children but can sometimes be overlooked by professionals or not seen at all. This training encourages solution focussed conversations with all family members.

We want people to talk about relationship difficulties as soon as they start to become a worry for someone. We know from the evidence that people want to talk to someone they know and feel comfortable with. Therefore it comes as no surprise that GPs are spending lots of their time providing this type of support.

Here in the Rochdale borough we would like all practitioners to become relationship champions. Once trained, champions wear a distinctive badge, linked to a public campaign which encourages a conversation with a champion.

How to book

All courses are advertised and can be booked on the link below:

School staff can book via the Real Trust:

 rbscp.org/multi-agency-training-courses/courses

For more information about the relationships work please visit:

 rochdale.gov.uk/rochdalerelationshipsmatter

To order relationship champion posters for your place of work email:

 rochdalerelationshipsmatter@rochdale.gov.uk



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