

An introduction to Connective Parenting NVR



Aims of the course

To understand the principles of Connective Parenting and how it can help parents to create connected relationships with their children.

To leave with strategies that as parents you can start implementing straight away, particularly focusing on managing challenging behaviour.



What is Connective Parenting?

Connective Parenting® is an adaptation of the Non-Violent Resistance programme which is a philosophy that was used by Gandhi and Martin Luther King and then developed by Professor Haim Omer to be used in family settings.

It's a way of parenting that is child focused but not child centred.

It focuses on changing the way you interact with your child rather than changing the child.



What is Connective Parenting?

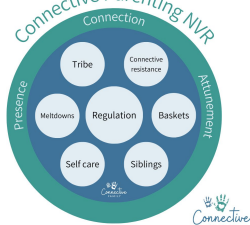
It's easy to understand but not always easy to implement!
It can feel counter intuitive.

Focus on what is done, rather than said.

Be kind to yourself.
It's OK to make mistakes, we all do.
The important thing is to keep going.



Connective Parenting NVR



In this course we will cover...

- Parental Presence
- Managing meltdowns (De-escalation)
- Prioritising behaviours (baskets)
- Self Care
- Tribe (Supporters)
- Reconciliation Gestures



Parental Presence

- Parental anchor
 - You provide a secure base or safe harbour
- Felt whether the child is with you or not
- Not changing the child, but how they see their carer



Parental Presence

- Emotional Presence
 - Through emotional self-regulation
 - Parental self-control
 - Showing interest in your child
 - Growing confidence in ability to parent and manage situations
- Physical Presence
 - Spending time with them



Parental Presence

- Cognitive Presence
 - Responsive rather than reactive parenting
- Social Presence
 - Building and maintaining a support network
 - Continuously developing the relationship between you and your child



Ways you can increase your Parental Presence

- Show a real interest in your child
- Ask questions to show you're interested in their lives
- Watching a film of their choice/their favourite song
- Engage in their favourite hobby or game
- Plan in time for undivided attention even if only 10 mins
- Spend time at bed time being with them or chatting
- Validate their feelings and ensure we avoid shame
- Thinking about their needs in the moment
- Use relational gestures to rebuild connection



Lost Parental Presence

- When you feel that you have lost your presence it can be very difficult. You can be left feeling useless as a parent and often with a sense of despair.
- It might feel as if nothing is working, as it doesn't matter what you do nothing changes.
- These feelings are not uncommon and can result in a downwards spiral in your relationship with your child, and sometimes between carers as well.



Burnout

When you feel you have lost your parental presence it can lead to feeling helplessness, hopelessness and possibly depression.

These feelings result in a downwards spiral in the relationship between parent and child.

Burnout and secondary trauma can follow on from that. Burnout is when even everyday tasks seem overwhelming and carers try and deal with everything at the same time.



Self-care

Looking after yourself is crucial. It is not a luxury.

Self-care helps self-regulation allowing you to deal with situations in a calmer manner. Being able to regulate yourself is a level of success in itself and a good role model to your child.



Self care continuum

Burnout / Freeze Maintenance Wellbeing



Understanding your own feelings

How you feel can have a direct impact on your family.

Running on empty makes it hard for you to look after yourself and your family. Be kind to yourself – we all have days when it goes wrong!

Make time for you.

Take time to understand your own beliefs and what makes you feel angry or frustrated. Working through those feelings can have a big impact on your connection with your child.



Escalation

Symmetrical Escalation

Giving in escalation



De-escalation

De-escalation is the middle ground between the two types of escalation.

Don't react during an escalation – defer your response.

Actions are aimed to minimise risks and lower the arousal level of the adult and child.

Your own self-regulation is the key.

Aim to raise presence, help your child to regulate and take action later.

Strike when the iron is cold



Deferring your response

This is the most important part. When your child is escalating, they cannot be rational and calm.

The deferred conversation is when you talk to them after the event. The aim of the conversation is to understand what was happening for them at the time. It isn't about punishing them or making them feel ashamed.

You can also repair during the conversation and apologise if you reacted in an unhelpful way.



There is NO punishment in NVR

Our aim is to build a connected relationship with our children, not make them feel shame for their actions.

Natural or logical consequences can help some children to learn the impact of their actions. It is important there is no 'I told you so' attached to them. We need to respond with empathy and understanding.

The deferred response helps them to understand their feelings and emotions, which will help them in the long run more than removing a toy/device, for example, would.



The Emotions Iceberg

defiance

anger control

scared nervous tired useless anxious overwhelm shame

depressed grief abandoned guilty grumpy sad

distrust worried grumpy exhaustion

defensive hungry lonely worthless insecure

Connective FAMILY

De-escalation Strategies

Different things will work at different times, so having a range of tools is important. Each parent may also find that what works for one doesn't work for the other.

- Humour
- Sensory Input
- Distraction
- Active Listening
- Not saying too much

Connective FAMILY

Active Listening

Acknowledging what our children have said is important, even if we don't like it or disagree with it.

As humans we want to be heard.

Reflect back what you have heard. Be empathetic and use a curious or neutral tone.

This is great for de-escalating but can also be used at any time for creating connection.

Connective FAMILY

Prioritising your concerns

Prioritising behaviours can make a big difference to how to you feel as a parent. It can take away some of the feeling of overwhelm.

2 baskets – small and large



Low priority behaviours



Top priority behaviours



The small basket is the most important behaviour (max 2) and what you deal with first. The big basket you ignore for now.



Prioritising your concerns

Remembering the positives is also important. It can be very easy to forget them and focus on the negatives.

Have a gratitude basket

- All the positive things
- Remember to refer to your gratitude basket regularly
- Your gratitude basket could be a journal that you write in regularly



Reconciliation Gestures

- Act of unconditional love
- Spontaneous
- NOT a reward
- Made regardless of behaviour
- Possibly rejected
- Parent 'feel good' factor
- Mental image of young person



Reconciliation Gestures Ideas

- Make them a drink / snack /their favourite meal
- Send a text/GIF/MEME
- Leave their favourite drink or snack in the fridge for them
- Leave them a note on bed or lunch box
- Make their bed for them
- Warm their Pjs / hot water bottle for when they come home
- Give them their favourite meal
- Put their favourite music on
- Fix something they broke
- Tidy their room



What if your gestures are rejected?

- Keep going, it may take time for your child to accept them
- Don't take it personally
- Think about what you are doing, is it meeting their needs or something they would like?



Tribe *"It takes a village to raise a child."*

To help and support you - it is not a weakness.

Choosing the right support is crucial (it may not be your wider family)

NVR Supporters can be a mediator, an ear when you need someone to talk to, a witness.



Tribe *"It takes a village to raise a child."*

Family, neighbours, school, professionals, friends, club leaders.

How you ask is important - be clear about what you need from them, and check they are happy to support in that way.

Each child in the household also needs their own supporter... someone they trust



Any questions?

Thank you!

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