



Relationship Matter resources March 2025

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Find all this and more on our web-pages

✓ [Relationship support for parents and co-parents](#)

✓ [Support for separating and separated parents](#)

Or find FREE online parenting courses including **Understanding your relationships** on our family hub site ✓ [Online parenting courses](#)

Editorial

31st March 2025

Eid Mubarak! As Spring arrives, we extend best wishes to those celebrating and acknowledge the upcoming Easter break for school staff. We also bid farewell to our dedicated practitioners, **Gina Pazienza** and **Katie Cheyne**, who are moving on to new roles within the Through Care and SEND Assessment teams.

The *Supporting Inter-Parental Communication* project, funded by the *Youth Endowment Fund*, has now closed to new referrals. Support for families already engaged will continue until August.

This will be our final newsletter in its current format, as updates on the *Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) programme* will now be included in the *Family Hub Newsletter*. Watch out for a separate email to **subscribe and stay informed**.

This newsletter remains a resource for professionals supporting parents and carers. If you would like to receive it in PowerPoint format for easier sharing, **please email us**. This edition includes valuable resources, including the *Race Equality Foundation's* toolkit for professionals working with families (see page 11).

While this marks a transition, the *Reducing Parental Conflict* programme continues, with additional funding secured for 2025-26. See page 12 for one of my favourite evidence-based relationship skill: the *Speaker-Listener* technique.

Relationships Matter is part of



Supporting Families

We have identified increasing demand for support among:

- Families with children who have SEND
- Families experiencing or who have experienced separation
- Fathers
- Families from underrepresented faith or community groups

Public awareness of parental conflict and its impact remains low. Greater awareness could encourage self-referrals and earlier intervention from frontline practitioners.

Working with Children & Young People

The importance of directly involving children in programme development was highlighted in the *RPC Stakeholder Engagement Report* (Dec 2024). While we have not yet provided direct support, we have shared useful resources, such as [NSPCC's Promoting Healthy Relationships in Schools](#). **Contact us for a full list of resources.**

Looking Ahead (2025-26)

- **Multi-agency training (page 8)** to strengthen pathways for inter-parental support.
- **A new toolkit** for safeguarding and pastoral staff in schools.
- **A communications campaign** to improve accessibility of resources for professionals and families.

Thank you for your continued support in reducing parental conflict. Get in touch if you have any questions!

Emily Ingle, relationshipsmatter@bristol.gov.uk

Free pack of cards for getting on better

Getting on Better (2023)

Arguments are like fire



Get your free printed pack of 9 by contacting
Relationshipsmatter@bristol.gov.uk
or download a pack from
bristol.gov.uk/relationshipsupport



The LOGS



What issues do you argue about most?

The MATCH



What usually starts an argument?

The FUEL



What makes it worse? Are you fuelling the fire?

The WATER



What helps calm things down?

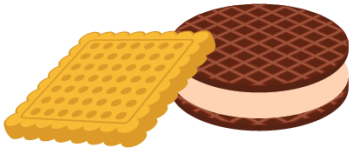
Getting on Better (2024)

The importance of small gestures

NEW

oneplusone

➡ Small acts of kindness can make a big difference to your relationship.



➡ Kindness and thoughtfulness are important in long-term relationships. Regularly doing nice things for your partner without being asked, like making them a cup of tea, can mean more than big gestures or presents as it shows you care about them.

Arguments are like fire

1) You can think of arguments as a fire.

The **LOGS** are the things you argue about most. Even when you're getting on well, the logs are still there.

Some common ones are:

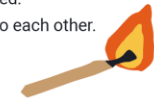
- Money.
- Friends.
- Housework.
- Sex.
- Children.



Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/logsandfire to watch the relevant video clip

2) The MATCH can be anything that starts an argument. It's often something small:

- The wrong tone of voice.
- Feeling stressed.
- Not listening to each other.



3) Once the argument has started, we can make things worse by the way we respond. This can ADD FUEL to the fire:

- Raising your voice.
- Walking out.
- Bottling things up.
- Saying hurtful things.
- Bringing up old arguments.



4) There are also things we can do to stop the argument getting worse. This is like putting WATER on the fire.

- Taking a break.
- Listening.
- Saying sorry.
- Having a hug.



A few things to try:

- Think about what your logs might be.
- Next time you argue, try to notice when you're adding fuel.
- See if you can water things down before the argument escalates.

Digital courses - What parents say . . .



It has helped me and my husband have much better discussions before emotions escalate to the point of becoming an argument. It's also helped me support my children.

Arguing better
(for parents together):
3 modules,
30 minutes total

We are starting to think before we speak and come up with better ways to make sure it's the children we always put first for their happiness and health

Getting it right for children
(separated parents):
5 modules, 90 minutes total

Availability
time limited
Register
NOW!

I've learnt that being emotionally supportive is crucial to healthy relationships. I'm using some of these healthy techniques already, good to add more to the inventory. Now I feel better equipped to handle tough situations even more so

Me, You and Baby Too
(perinatal parents):
3 modules,
30 minutes total

You can access **free** courses until end of August 2026 to help you and your partner in pregnancy, if you have conflict in your relationship or if you are separating or separated. They will help you look at your arguments differently and to manage and resolve conflicts in a way that causes less harm to your unborn child, existing family or each other.

To access a course for the first time, you will need to register for an account by providing your name, email address and creating a password. [Start a course](#) Download the practitioner guides from 'select a guide' [Practitioner guides to digital courses](#)

See it differently

Often when we argue, we get caught up in the moment. We can't always understand others or see it from another point of view. See it differently have put together a series of short videos to help you.



[Watch Maddie's video](#)
(chores & roles)



[Watch Mahmoud's video](#)
(needing attention/time together)



[Watch Jag's video](#)
(money worries)



[Watch Chloe's video](#)
(separated parents)

See it differently

***You don't see your arguments.
Your children do.***

Watch these **FREE** videos to learn
how you can reduce harmful conflict.

[**www.seeitdifferently.org**](http://www.seeitdifferently.org)



 **oneplusone**

Sometimes it's hard to understand others and as parents we are always busy. Look at when your stressful times of the day and week occur and how you could support each other.



Date & venue:

22nd May 2025 –
virtual

16th October 2025 -
virtual

To book:

Please visit

<https://bristol.event-booking.org.uk>

Or
click
[here](#)

KBSP Reducing Parental Conflict Training

Suitable for working groups: B & C

NHS Level: 2

Course length: One full-day session

Cost: Free (funded by the Reducing Parental Conflict Local Area Grant)

Note: If you book a place on this course but do not attend on the day, or fail to cancel your place within 5 working days of the course date, you will be charged a £100 non-attendance fee (as in line with our cancellation policy).

Course Description


Aim:


To have an increased understanding of what parental conflict is and the impact on children, and how we can work with parents to reduce this.


Objectives:


- To understand the difference between parental conflict and domestic abuse
- To explore the significance of early involvement, the key differences between destructive and constructive conflict and the impact this has on child outcomes.
- To explore why active listening and empathy are as important as asking the right questions
- To practice using a range of supportive tools in scenario-based activities, to reduce parental conflict
- To be able to identify where relationship distress exists, explore with parents the cause of the conflict and support them to develop more constructive ways of communicating

Just for separating or separated families


[SeparateSpace](#) have a fantastic new resource aimed at supporting children experiencing divorce and they also provide tailored support for families going through parental separation  [Free Interactive Book for Children](#)

Support for young people ages 12+ whose parents have split up including parents in civil partnerships and cohabiting couples  [Your Direction Workshops for Teenagers and Young People](#)

[Family Lives](#) have some great resources around the impact of family breakdown, and offer a free online co-parenting course  [Co-parenting after divorce or separation free online parenting course | Family Lives](#)

[OnlyMums & Dads](#) have a Family Separation Support Hub with lots of useful contacts especially in the context of family law and wellbeing  [- Family Separation Support Hub](#)

[Fatherhood institute](#) have a number of factsheets including  [Co-parenting across households](#)

[OnePlusOne](#) resources include an app for your phone. You can get practical tips and resources including completing a parenting plan and there are resources to support your emotional wellbeing too.  [Separating better](#)
Or learn more [Watch our new Separating better animated video](#)

Or book-mark the Bristol City Council web-page  [Support for separating and separated parents](#)

Relate Tools for Improving Communication Between Couples and Co-Parents

"In the middle" bot

The 'in the middle' bot is a chatbot that helps you understand how your child sees your relationship. With a small amount of information and zero judgement, you can learn how your child might be feeling.

"Sounding board" bot

Made for parents who are having disagreements, this tool helps you write emails, text messages, or get ready to talk with your partner or co-parent. Relate's "sounding board" bot is here to help you keep your messages clear, polite, and positive.

Relate has launched a 32-page **co-parenting toolkit**.

The toolkit includes communication tips, how to handle conflict, supporting children's wellbeing, self-care and other practical resources. You can download it free [here](#).

Reducing Parental Conflict

The Race Equality Foundation's Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC) team have been running a programme of work around family conflict and, in particular, conflict between those in parenting/caring roles.



Stronger Relationships programme

An evidence-based SFSC programme, designed to empower parents and caregivers. Our focus is to support families and strengthen connections through practical strategies.



Parental conflict toolkit

Parental conflict toolkit Toolkit designed for use by public health nurses, including, midwives, health visitors, school nurses, general practice nurses and other professionals working with families.



Training and resources for SFSC facilitators

Supporting families early so that conflict doesn't lead to lasting damage for children, young people, their families and wider communities is at the heart of the SFSC Advance Skills Training, and resource pack

This [toolkit](#) is designed for use by public health nurses, including, midwives, health visitors, school nurses, general practice nurses and other professionals working with families. Through our research, we identified 9 main topic areas to include in the toolkit. This was a co-production, with the design of this toolkit being led by the front-line practitioners for whom it is intended. We have designed the toolkit to be mobile friendly so that each topic can be accessed 'on the go', with 'read more' pages available for each topic to give a deeper understanding and access wider resources. Practitioners are reminded that the welfare of children is paramount; better outcomes for children are best achieved by working in partnership with others. Every family will have its own issues. Practitioners should work holistically with parents and children and respond to their needs. Effective collaboration will include practitioners acquainting themselves with other professionals, community and faith organisations working with families locally.

Speaker Listener Technique

This technique helps you talk in a way that is both clear (so you truly understand what your partner is saying) and safe (no one fears the argument will get out of hand). Talking in this positive way helps prevent destructive ways of communicating: negative escalation of the argument, invalidating your partner, one person forcing the conversation while the other backs off, and negative interpretations of what your partner is thinking.

General Rules:

1. The speaker has the floor. (Use an object, such as a pen, to show who the speaker is).
2. Speaker keeps the floor while the listener paraphrases.
3. Share the floor. Take turns letting each person be the speaker.
4. Don't problem-solve. Focus on seeking to understand and attune, not find a solution.

Rules for the Speaker:

1. Speak for yourself. Focus on feelings and needs. Avoid mind reading or using perceptions as feelings.
2. Be brief. Don't go on and on.
3. Stop to let the listener paraphrase.

Rules for the Listener:

1. Paraphrase what you hear.
2. Focus on the speaker's message. Don't rebut.