

Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA)

The following information is taken from the Home Office Information guide:
Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse

Overview Description

- This is also known as 'child to parent violence / abuse' and 'battered parent syndrome'
- It is increasingly recognised as a form of domestic violence and abuse and is a safeguarding issue
- It is likely to involve a pattern of behaviour that can include physical violence towards a parent, damage to property, emotional abuse, and economic / financial abuse
- Abusive behaviours can encompass: humiliating language and threats, belittling a parent, damage to property, stealing from a parent and heightened sexualised behaviours
- Patterns of coercive control are often seen in cases of APVA, but some families might experience episodes of explosive physical violence from their adolescent with fewer controlling, abusive behaviours
- Participants in one study, said their teenage children had smashed up property, kicked holes in doors, broken windows, thrown things at their parents and made threats. Verbal abuse and other controlling behaviours were also commonly present.
- The pattern of behaviour creates an environment where a parent lives in fear of their child and often curtails their own behaviour in order to avoid conflict, contain or minimise violence
- APVA appears to affect all levels of society
- It is relevant to both primary and secondary education as the onset of patterns of APVA can be as early as age eight or nine and continue through adolescence and sometimes into adulthood

Why does it happen?

substance
abuse

mental health
problems

family history of domestic
violence or self-harm

learning
difficulties

Some families were at a loss to explain why their child was so aggressive towards them, having raised other children who did not display such behaviour

Supporting Families - It is helpful to gain an understanding of:

any domestic abuse history or current domestic abuse within the family unit

the pattern of behaviour in the family unit; siblings may also be abused or be abusive

the effects on both the parent and the young person; try to establish trust and support for both

the pattern of behaviour and the relationship between the young person and the parent

Difficult / Sensitive Issues for Parents

- Parents may present as fearful, ashamed, guilty or intimidated by their child.
- They may experience feelings of isolation, guilt and shame
- They may be reluctant to report their child's abuse / violence
- They may fear that their parenting skills may be questioned and that they will be blamed or disbelieved
- They may worry their victimisation will not be taken seriously or that they will be held to account and that their child may be taken away from them and/or criminalised (often not what the parent wishes)
- Yet there are also situations where a criminal justice response may be appropriate in the interests of safety, and the parent(s) may support the removal of their child or ask for it

Approaches and Interventions

- There is a need to move away from the emphasis on parental responsibility and blame
- It is important for practitioners to believe victims (whether young people or parents), take their concerns seriously and validate the impact on them
- It is important that a young person takes responsibility for their behaviour
- Seek to identify risk factors early and work together with the family to provide early support to avoid crisis situations
- There needs to be a considered approach reflecting the whole family's dynamics and wider family issues. Adolescent violence and abuse should not be seen as independent of these dynamics
- Tailored responses to APVA are needed (rather than relying upon generic parenting programmes)

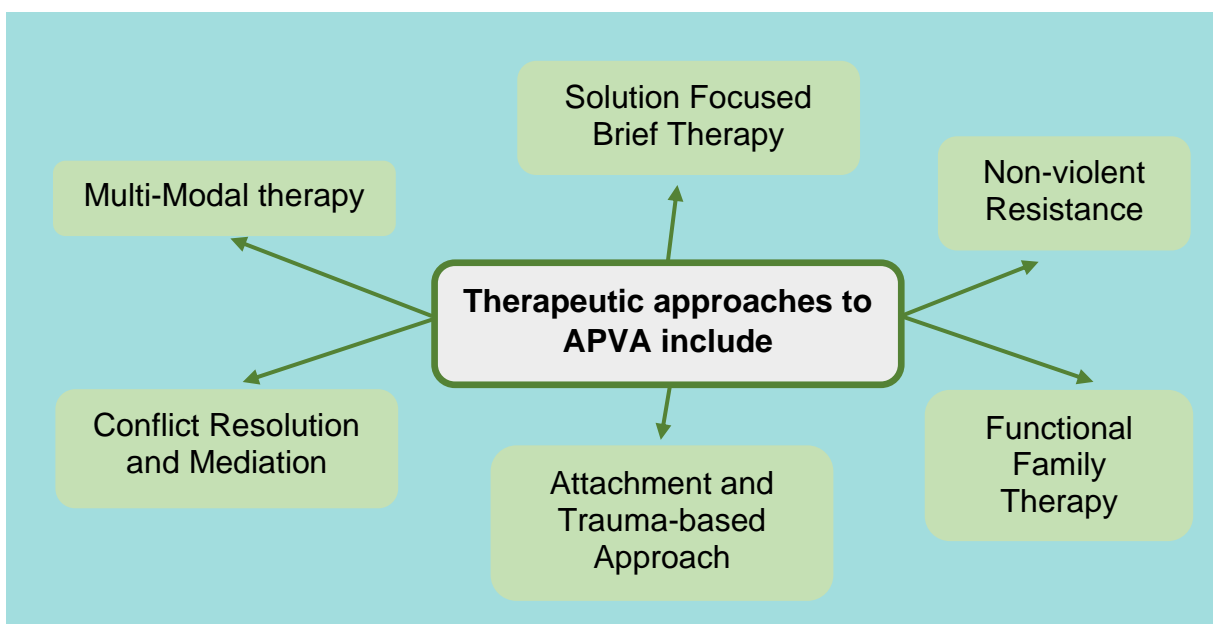
Safeguarding: It is important that a young person using abusive behaviour against a parent receives a safeguarding response. (The statutory guide 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' sets out what professionals and organisations need to do). As with all other child protection concerns, in-school procedures should be adopted with referral to child protection leads and onward multi-agency referrals /co-working as appropriate.

Initial safety concerns or basic safety planning should always be addressed. School nurses are often able to build trusting relationships with school children and their families, and so may be the first professional to become aware of a problem within the family. This should be addressed in the same way as they would any other safeguarding issue.

Risk Assessment See the APVA Guidance 2.6. for a list specific factors to consider relating to environmental factors and emotional self-regulation

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) See the APVA Guidance 2.8. The guidance states that in cases involving 16-17 year olds professional judgement will be required to decide whether the MARAC or safeguarding route is more appropriate.

Safety Planning See the APVA Guidance 2.10.



Evidence Base

https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/final_report_capv_in_covid-19_aug20.pdf

<https://domesticabusecommissioner.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CAPVA-Rapid-Literature-Review-Exec-Summary-November-2021-Baker-and-Bonnick.pdf>

Useful Resources

Bonnick, H. *Child to Parent Violence and Abuse: A Practitioner's Guide to Working with Families* (2019)

Greater Manchester's Safeguarding Guidelines

<https://greatermanchesterscp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/adolescent-to-parent-violence-and-abuse-apva>

Helplines/Support

The national charity Family Lives runs a helpline for parents:

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/>

National Domestic Violence Helpline

The Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge – 0808 2000 247

Parental Education Growth Support: <https://www.pegssupport.co.uk/>

BACKGROUND

Child to parent violence and abuse (CPVA) is the most hidden and stigmatised form of family violence. It is also much misunderstood by agencies and professionals. CPVA is also vastly under reported due to the stigma felt by parents living with an abusive child. Parents and carers often feel guilt and shame when their child is abusive and violent towards them.

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WHAT IS CHILD TO PARENT VIOLENCE

There is no current legal definition of CPVA. It is any behaviour used by a child in a family to control, dominate, threaten or coerce a parent or sibling.

It is recognised as a form of domestic violence and abuse and, depending on the age of the child, may fall under the government's official definition of domestic violence and abuse. Identification of a child involved in CPVA should warrant a referral to children's social care as a safeguarding precaution.

2

WHY IT MATTERS

The impact is extremely severe, debilitating, isolating and often parents and carers do not know how to start to tackle it. Emotional and physical abuse are both part of the picture. Parents often feel ashamed of the situation which can also prevent them from reporting they often see it as *their* failure to control the child.

CPVA can be experienced by mothers, fathers, siblings and carers from daughters and sons, however, studies and statistics show that women and mothers are most at risk. Whilst girls and boys use CPVA, boys are most likely to use physical violence.

It is predominantly mothers, lone parents and those parents facing significant social and family stressors who are most likely to experience abuse from their children.

The majority of cases are in birth families, but there is a higher prevalence in fostered and adopted children since the latter are more likely to have disruptive behaviour problems.

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FURTHER INFORMATION AND READING

Thorley and Coates: Let's Talk about child to parent violence 2018

Holes in the wall.co.uk

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7 Minute Briefing Child to Parent Violence

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE

A pilot intervention, using the Respect young People's Programme, is under way, working predominantly with families in South Manchester. If successful, it is hoped that this programme will roll out across the rest of the city during 2020/21.

For further information please contact The Community Safety Team in the first instance on: 0161 234 1284 or Email: communitysafety@manchester.gov.uk.

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RISK FACTORS

There are a number of risk factors which make abusive behaviour more likely. There are many reasons why children and young people can become abusive. There may be a combination of issues or no explanation at all.

Witnessing family violence. Trauma, loss and disruption
Substance misuse. Mental Health.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) are stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect. It is likely that children displaying violent or aggressive behaviours will have an ACE score of at least 4 and in most cases higher.

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WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE

Anger is an emotion; violence is about power and control. Violence is not the same as anger.

CPVA can include any or all of the following:

Physical violence, including bullying or physical violence to siblings as well as parents.
Emotional, Psychological and Verbal abuse yelling, screaming, swearing, 'put downs' and humiliation for example.

Financial can include demanding money or things parents cannot afford. Incurring debt that the parent is then responsible for.