

Changing Family Dynamics during COVID restrictions, Family Conflict and Abuse The Importance of Connection and Community



Anne Marie Sheridan
Project Worker
Springboard Family Support Project

It is More Important Now Than Ever That We
Stick Together



Changing Family Dynamics during COVID Restrictions

- 12th of March 2020: our schools, colleges and childcare facilities closed.
- 24th of March 2020: businesses and all amenities shut
- 27th of March 2020: all non-essential travel and contact with people outside our own home was banned, including partners and family
- **FAMILIES WERE AT HOME TOGETHER 24 HRS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK!!!**



The Positives!

- Connection- getting to know our children- spending quality time with them
- Time to be- time to relax- no rushing
- Discovering nature with our 2km and exercising outdoors



shutterstock.com • 1153832731

• Most importantly we had time to reflect on what is important to us as individuals, as families and as a society

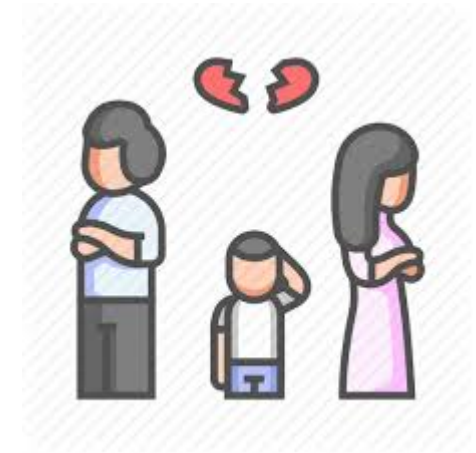
The Challenges

- Loneliness and Isolation
- Family Conflict
- Domestic Violence
- Child to Parent Violence
- Elder Abuse



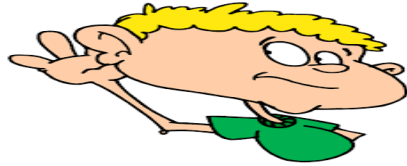
Family Conflict

- Conflict is a serious disagreement or argument
- Conflict is a normal part of life and can be very healthy
- It is important that our children learn to manage conflict, voice their opinions and come to agreements
- As parent we too need to be able to manage conflict



Managing Conflict with your Children

- LISTEN!! What are your children trying to tell you through their behaviour



- EMPATHY. Put yourself in your child's shoes, what is it like for them, surviving in their world.



- DON'T GET IN TO THE FIGHT.
- You do not need to shout back
- You do not need to have the last word



Managing Conflict with your Children

- MAKE AGREEMENTS
- GUIDE YOUR CHILDREN
- Learn to apologise when you do shout or make a mistake
- Encourage your children to express their opinion
- Discuss rather than argue
- If you use rewards and punishments look at the benefit to this, are they decreasing or increasing conflict?
- SHOW AN INTEREST IN THEIR WORLD



Child to Parent Violence

- We are becoming more aware of
Child To Parent Violence
- Child to Parent Violence is under reported



- **Child to parent violence and abuse is an *abuse of power* through which children & young people aged 18 years of age and younger coerces, controls or dominates others in the family. It is a pattern of harmful acts through which a child or adolescent gains power and control over family members through threats or use of physical, psychological and/or financial abuse/ violence. *If parents/carers feel they must adapt their behaviour due to threats or abusive/ violent behaviour by a child or adolescent, then there is child to parent violence.* (CPV Ireland)**

Why mothers 'put up with' and 'don't talk about' child to parent violence

- To avoid blame
- To maintain the image of a happy family
- Because they blame themselves
- To protect their child
- For fear of losing their relationship with their child
- Fear of being judged
- Feeling incompetent
- Fear of repercussions from their child



If You are Experiencing Child to Parent Violence

- **Non-Violent Resistance** is a programme which supports parents to reduce conflict and repair relationships.
- Contact Springboard Family Support Project for more information
- Staff in Parentline are trained in NVR and are familiar with child to parent violence



Domestic Violence



- Domestic Violence: happens in couple relationships or between family members. Domestic Violence can happen against women and men it can happen against children (HSE).
- Women's Aid define domestic abuse as an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. It is very common. In the vast majority of cases it is experienced by women and is perpetrated by men.

Domestic Violence

- Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following:
- Coercive Control (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence)
- Psychological and/or emotional abuse
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Financial abuse
- Harassment and stalking
- Online or digital abuse



Practical Support

as advised by womens aid



- Give her the numbers of Women's Aid and Sonas
- Offer the use of your phone number for return calls
- Get a 'pay as you go' mobile phone which she can hide and store relevant phone numbers in the contacts
- If she would like to talk to her family help her do this
- If she would like to talk to the Gardai help her do this
- If she has been physically hurt offer to bring her to the G.P. or hospital
- Agree a code word/sign/symbol with her which she can use if she is in danger and needs help.
- Offer her the use of your address and/or telephone number to leave information and messages, and tell her you will look after an emergency bag for her, if she wants this.
- Give her a small amount of money to put away in case she needs a taxi or bus in an emergency to leave the house and go to family or refuge.

If a friend is experiencing abuse

as advised by Women's Aid



- **Emotional Support**

- Listen
- Give her time to talk
- Don't push for information
- Acknowledge her feelings
- Tell her that she does not deserve to be abused-abuse is not okay
- Do not tell her what you think she should do

Elder Abuse

- There are a number of types of elder abuse, including physical abuse, financial or material abuse, psychological abuse, neglect and acts of omission, sexual abuse and discriminatory abuse.
- According to Safeguarding Ireland there has been a 12% increase in elder and vulnerable adult abuse reported since the beginning of COVID restriction



How can you support elderly and vulnerable members of your community during COVID Restrictions

- Call to the door for a chat or to drop in the news paper /food/gift
- Ask how they are, work on building a relationship.
- By your presence you will make it known to family that there is a community around the person
- If you suspect abuse contact Age Action Ireland or the HSE asking for the 'Safeguarding Team',





STAY CONNECTED

- We can still walk with one person
- Phone people don't rely on WhatsApp only
- If you are worried about someone call to the door-you can social distance and wear a mask
- It is really important that we keep an eye and an ear out for each other
- Silence and Isolation are dangerous ingredients when it comes to abuse

Where to Get Support

- **Elderly and Vulnerable**
- **Wicklow, Dun Laoghaire and Dublin South East**
- Mr. Tony McCusker, Ballinteer Health Centre, Ballinteer Avenue, Ballinteer, Dublin 16.
- Tel: 01 2164511 Email: Safeguarding.cho6@hse.ie Tel: (01) 475 6989
- Email: helpline@ageaction.ie

Child to Parent Violence

- Parent Line
- 1890 927277 or (01) 8733500
- Groups and Individual work with parents using a proven programme called **Non-Violent Resistance** are being carried out in Family Support Projects and Resource Centres.
- **For Further information contact** : Springboard Family Support Project: 01-2814935

*When women support each other,
incredible things happen.*



When you Feel Powerless

Amy deBrun

Imagine

Imagine the power in your light

Imagine the best version of yourself

Imagine all you can do

Look out

Find the light in others

Follow it

Absorb it

Radiate it out into the world

And let it roar from the depths of you

It's all you have

You have the power

Imagine