Book review -'Non-Violent Resistance Innovations in Practice'

Written by: Elisabeth Heismann and Elizabeth Day

This book is made up of chapters which show the myriad ways in which non-violent resistance (NVR) has grown since its original conception as a clinical application by Haim Omer and professional teams in Tel Aviv.

We believe that the roots of NVR are to be found among those individuals who believed in making a better and fairer world, who acted outside the usual frame and were positioned at the forefront of their movements. Connection, participation, collaboration, reflecting-on and reflecting-in practice are all key elements of this approach. Therefore, we have decided to include the voices of parents, practitioners and first-time writers on the same stage as established authors, indigenous scholars and academics. Where people are writing in English, and it is not their first language, we have tried to preserve some of the flavour of their voice, because doing so gives voice also to their community; this is a reflexive and performative process. We hope it will encourage those who have not yet told their stories to feel that they have something to offer.

We have grouped the chapters into five sections: emerging themes, working for a better future, working with difference, working with groups, and working in and with schools. We asked authors to include examples from practice to illustrate their writing.

Part 1 - Emerging themes

These first seven chapters describe developments in NVR and in New Authority thinking and practice.

Frank Van Holen & Johan Vanderfaeillie carry out a critical review of NVR and New Authority through a review of the literature. They compare and contrast the two approaches and explore who uses each intervention, in which contexts and with what problematic behaviours. The effectiveness of NVR as an intervention is reviewed through the literature.

Uri Weinblatt explores the impact of shame on children, adolescents and parents. He deconstructs episodes and shows in detail how shame, hurt and blame are connected and can escalate situations.

Haim Omer & Naama Gershy write about the value of fathers in child development and how to engage them in situations where there is parental conflict or separation or when fathers are unused to participating actively in childcare. They offer practical suggestions for managing fathers' reluctance to become involved and encouraging collaboration between parents.

Julia Jude & Veronika Rivera-Gould develop this theme in their chapter. They set the literature about fathers within a wider framework and critique the prevalence of Eurocentric approaches to making meaning of gendered parenting roles. They bring in the voices of fathers who were interviewed about their experiences of participating

in NVR groups, and address changing relationships, changing engagement and perceptions of fathering in NVR.

Peter Jakob examines what happens between parents, caregivers and children when trauma blunts responses. He describes how parents and caregivers can rekindle a 'caring dialogue' in order to carry on, and enable the child to accept their overtures of care.

Julia Jude sets out a theoretical framework within which she explores NVR as a safeguarding intervention with parents. She draws on the literature about how we learn and connects this to the benefits of coaching. Sarah McClay joins the conversation and describes how NVR empowered her to take a different position with her son who was involved in gang-related activities. Sarah speaks about the importance for parents of being encouraged to practise their NVR skills in order to move forward.

Linda Cakebread describes how she has used NVR in adult mental health services in London. She describes situations where parents of adult children were finding it hard to resist their children's demands. This is a practical application of NVR by someone who has, in the past, been in the situation of a parent needing help herself.

Part 2 - Working for a better future

We have chosen the two chapters in this section because they stand out for their passion for bringing about change at a macro level.

Ziv Gilad has called his chapter 'Building trust and cooperation between Israeli Police and Israeli-Arab Citizens: Non-Violent Resistance as a way towards a better future'. Ziv describes a pilot study comparing the behaviour of two groups of recently qualified police officers in a simulated conflict situation; one had received training in constructive struggle and the other (the control group) had not. This interesting study has implications for the training of police in any country where there is a climate of high conflict.

Zoe McLeod and Gill Westwood show how their NVR approach to young people who find themselves before the courts is situated within a much wider commitment to improving the lives of disadvantaged families in their inner-city area.

Part 3 - Working with difference

Julia Jude argues for a radical rethink of the discourses around parenting for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic families themselves and those agencies who work with them. She suggests that NVR principles are well placed to be integrated with post-colonial thinking.

Emma Fayter writes about the experience of running NVR groupwork programmes in culturally diverse neighbourhoods. She describes tailoring NVR to meet the particular cultural needs of the local Bangladeshi community.

Gilda Flores Acqueveque describes developing and delivering NVR programmes for Latin American families in London. Many Latin Americans do not access health and social care, are isolated, work anti-social hours and are far away from their traditional networks of support. Gilda shows how communities of parents can be created and support networks can evolve through a culturally specific NVR programme in Spanish.

Carol Payne contributes an individual case study which describes her clinical work with a mixed heritage family in southern England.

Part 4 - Working with groups

Elizabeth Day locates NVR groups within the wider history of groupwork and the context of parenting programmes.

Elisabeth Heisman explains the theoretical and political underpinnings of the participatory approach. This is a rich description of the ideas and literature which inform the participation of graduate parents in the NVR programmes.

This is followed by a fascinating free flowing conversation about the value of parent participation by the people who developed it and the parents who have taken it forward and made it their own.

Pete Brown sets out an array of practical advice for parents within the NVR and wider literature. He introduces specific phrases that enable parents to begin the process of reconnecting with their children. Pete also describes how parents can protect themselves from hurt in order to remain calm in their journey towards better relationships.

Elisabeth Heismann, Julie Pierzchniak and Jane Prescott reflect on the experience of developing and running specialist NVR groups for parents whose children are gang members, or affected by gangs, and those exposed to child sexual exploitation. They describe how the NVR approach enables them to work with and alongside families taken hostage by a culture of poverty, deprivation and divided loyalties.

Part 5 - Working in and with schools

Delegates who attended the 2017 NVR UK conference were asked what topics they wanted covered in future training. Work in schools was the area which received the most votes.

Dorota Rospierska and Kyla Evans describe their NVR work within school communities in south-east London. They give a detailed account of developing and nurturing NVR in schools and locate their practice within the wider systemic framework.

Idan Amiel and Tal Maimon describe their ground-breaking programme in schools. They use NVR principles to empower teachers and create support networks to reduce problematic behaviour among students. They reach out to parents and enable them to participate in school interventions.
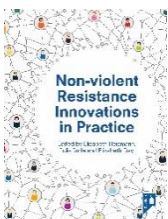
This new title is available to pre-order at a discounted price for NVR professionals!

Book it here from the publisher and enter the code: **NVR20** in your basket to claim your exclusive 20% discount.