



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

MediaBook

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Title: City to host conference on child to parent violence

Source: Galway Bay FM

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Programme: 13:00 News

Presenter: Stella Meehan

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City to host conference on child to parent violence

A conference on child to parent violence will take place in the city next month. 'Child to Parent Violence: Innovations in Practice, Policy and Research' will seek to raise awareness and share information about the best practice in responding to child to parent violence.

'Child to Parent Violence: Innovations in Practice, Policy and Research', conference

EU

NUI Galway



BY DENISE McNAMARA

A SOLD out conference in Galway will examine the taboo subject of violence by children towards a parent which family workers report is a growing phenomenon in Ireland.

Research in the US based on police records has discovered that 18% of two-parent families and 29% of one-parent families experience child-to-parent violence.

While there is very little research conducted in the field here, the support phone service Parent Line has recorded that incidents of child-to-parent violence has skyrocketed in the past two years.

Declan Coogan, lecturer in social work in the School of Political Science and Sociol-

ogy at NUI Galway is leading the Irish arm of project rolled out in five European countries called Responding to Child to Parent Violence (RCPV). He has been holding training courses for practitioners around the country such as social workers, family support liaisons, psychotherapists, psychologists and juvenile justice workers, to help them respond to the issue.

Declan describes child-to-parent violence as a reversal of power within families, where parents are living in fear of their children who are aged under 18.

"It's fear, power and control. Parents feel they have no safety in their home. They consistently threaten, verbally or physically abuse, they issue threats to damage the prop-

erty," he explained.

One of the most difficult steps in getting to grips with the problem is to talk about it in the first place.

"In this country we tend to blame parents if children go

off the rails, so it's very difficult to talk about feeling afraid of your child. If people hear this is happening just not to them it can help them open up. It's the biggest barrier to talking about it."

Research in Australia indicates that it is prevalent in two types of families.

"It can be middle class families with what is referred to as over-entitled children, who are used to getting all they want and they begin to demand to stay out all night and do drugs. Also in some cases

there is a link between domestic violence and child to parent violence - after that increase in exposure to domestic violence some of the children turn against the mum."

Two models have been shown to be successful in breaking the cycle of violence.

The first is a ten-week course for parents to practice non-violence resistance. This involves committing to verbal and physical non-violence, learning de-escalation skills such as putting on the pause button so as not to add fuel to the fire but pressing play again when things have calmed down and practicing calming techniques.

They also recruit a support network - a friend, sibling or parent - to give them back-up and increase parental pres-

ence instead of withdrawing from their interaction, which could involve just calling them out of the blue to praise them when there is no conflict.

The second model, called Break for Change, involves group therapy with parents and teenagers in separate rooms to work through issues.

As part of the EU-funded RCPV project, the conference is bringing together 200 national and international experts to NUIG to examine in-

novations in practice, policy and research June 12 - 13.

The RCPV project team is led by Dr Paula Wilcox at the University of Brighton who is one of the keynote speakers. Rita O'Reilly of Parentline, Dr John Sharry of Parents Plus and workers from Waterside House in Galway, the domestic violence refuge, will also speak.

The Non Violent Resistance Handbook for Practitioners will be launched at the end of the conference.



Parents 'abused by own children' on rise

■ 1 in 7 callers to helpline report physical and verbal assaults

by Evelyn Ring

There has been an alarming rise in the number of children abusing their parents, with the majority suffering in silence because of shame and guilt.

One in seven calls made to Parentline last year were from parents who said they had been abused by their children. The abuse, which involves children up to and including adults, includes physical, emotional, and verbal abuse. The figure for people parenting alone is likely to be even higher.

Parentline chief executive Rita O'Reilly said calls to the helpline about child-to-parent violence had been increasing every year over the last five years.

The helpline now has a team trained to deal with parents experiencing domestic violence from their children. Ms O'Reilly said no parent wanted to admit

their child was violent towards them.

"Often, it is not talked about and can fester in the home," said Ms O'Reilly. "Parentline offers parents an opportunity to talk with someone in a confidential and non-judgmental setting and be offered the tools to deal with it."

Declan Coogan, a psychotherapist and lecturer in social work at the National University of Ireland Galway, said: "More and more parents are talking about child-to-parent violence, which has been a hidden but growing social problem in Ireland and across Europe."

Police arrest figures recorded in the US during the 1990s show that 18% of two-parent families and 29% of one-parent families reported that their children were abusing them.

Research published last year also found that 21% of

adolescent girls and boys attending school in Spain had been violent towards their parents.

Workers at Parentline have benefited from the Non Violent Resistance Programme adapted for use in Ireland by Mr Coogan.

NUI Galway will host an international conference on child-to-parent violence next month to raise awareness and share information on best practice, as part of an EU programme taking place in Ireland, England, Spain, Sweden, and Bulgaria called 'Responding to Child to Parent Violence'.

Ireland project leader Mr Coogan said one of the speakers at the conference, Eddie Gallagher, a psychologist based in Melbourne, Australia, found a lot of violence to parents happened when children felt a sense of entitlement on reaching a certain age.

"The children are growing up in middle class families where both parents are working," he said. "They are told they can't have sex, drink or take drugs because they are under age but they don't deal well with being told no and that leads to them assaulting parents."

"From what I have been told, and it seems to make sense to me, that where we are now with child-to-parent violence in this country is where we were with domestic violence about 30 years ago.

"Back then, nobody ever spoke about domestic violence, but gradually people began to talk about it and to find ways of dealing with it. That is what is happening now in relation to child-to-parent violence."

● See: www.parentline.ie



NUI Galway raises awareness on child to parent violence

NUI Galway will host the Child to Parent Violence: Innovations in Practice, Policy and Research conference, bringing together a variety of national and international speakers.

The conference, which will take place on June 12 and 13, aims to raise awareness and to share information about best practice when it comes to responding to the problem of child to parent violence.

Parents living with child to parent violence (where a son or daughter under the age of 18 years uses violence and controlling behaviour towards parents) often feel alone, frightened, ashamed and do not know where to turn for help. Practitioners, researchers and policy makers are often uncertain about how best to respond to the emerging problem of child to parent violence.

The conference is part of the EU funded DAPHNE programme across five countries called the Responding to Child to Parent Violence project. The RCPV project team consists of a team of international academics and practitioners led by Dr Paula Wilcox at the University of Brighton. The RCPV aims to reflect a wide range of expertise on intervening with child to parent violence, as well as geographical and cultural diversity across Europe.

Declan Coogan, lecturer in social work in the School of Political Science and Sociology at NUI Galway, is the RCPV project leader for Ireland. Waterside House COPE Galway, the Domestic Violence Refuge and Centre in Galway, is also part of the project as a local community partner.

Mr Coogan said: "More and more parents are talking about child to parent violence which has been a hidden but growing social problem in Ireland and across Europe. Practitioners working with families in Ireland are increasingly hearing parents describing their experiences of child to parent violence. The conference will assist social workers, psychologists, psychotherapists, juvenile justice practitioners and others working with children and families across a range of services increase their awareness and skills development when faced with child to parent violence.

The conference is also aimed at academics, researchers and policy makers as we try to better understand and respond to this problem throughout Europe."



Urzula Jedrol with her daughter Emily Jedrol at GMIT Architectural Technology Student Exhibition on Thursday.

Title: Discussion about Child to Parent Violence with International conference
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Presenter: Keith Finnegan
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Discussion about Child to Parent Violence with International conference

Discussion with Declan Coogan lecturer in social work in NUI Galway about International conference, NUI Galway raises awareness on Child to Parent Violence with International conference. There has been an alarming rise in the number of children abusing their parents, with the majority suffering in silence because of shame and guilt. This multi-agency research project aims to examine how a range of organisations in different countries across Europe are responding to it.

European Project

Spain

Ireland

Sweden

Bulgaria

The US

www.cpvireland.ie

Leaving cert

Parentline

Dublin

www.parentline.ie



Innovative Tuam teen project to present at international conference in Galway

improved.

In Brief...

By Slobhan Holliman

REPRESENTATIVES from those involved in an innovative project in Tuam targeting teens with violent behaviour will address an international conference in NUI Galway this week.

Youth Work Ireland, based on Dublin Road in the old Mercy Primary School, Galway Treo Nua Garda Youth Diversion Project and Tuam Family Support Services (Tusla) ran an innovative Child To Parent Violence (CPV) Intervention Programme in Tuam entitled Power2Change.

Findings from the programme will be presented at the Child to Parent Violence: Innovations in Practice, Policy & Research: International Conference in NUI Galway on Thursday.

The programme specifically targets young people aged 14-17 who are carrying out aggressive and/or violent behaviour towards their parents/carers and the parents/carers affected by such behaviour in the Co Galway area.

The programme aims to challenge aggressive and violent behaviour in a safe environment and ultimately promote healthy interpersonal relationships which will enrich the lives of young people and their families. A very specific aim of the programme is to reduce the risk of the cycle of violence continuing within families as young people and their parents or carers learn alternative ways of coping with stressful situations.

It is hoped that by providing an intervention to change the patterns of behaviour and the cycle of violence within families, the lives of future generations of children can be



Nonviolence central to new child aggression approach

Child-to-parent violence, the last taboo, can be tackled without reciprocal violence, a new programme contends



Lorna Higgins

Children's violent behaviour towards their parents is the "last taboo" as a "hidden but growing" social problem in Ireland and across Europe, according to speakers at a recent conference at National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG).

A new handbook on nonviolent resistance, published at the conference last month, aims to equip practitioners with the skills to support and empower parents, who are often very isolated.

The behaviour pattern, where a son or daughter under the age of 18 uses violence and/or controlling behaviour, has been the "elephant in the room", with parents feeling humiliated, guilty and unable to talk about it, Dr Paula Wilcox of the University of Brighton said.

Dr Wilcox is leading the EU-funded project Responding to Child-to-Parent Violence (RCPV), which involves academics and practitioners from Ireland, England, Sweden, Bulgaria and Spain.

Noting that the research is continuing, Dr Wilcox cited recent statistics that showed 87 per cent of victims were mothers. Most support agencies had no specific definition and little experience in responding, she said, as it was a "new field with no policy or practical guidance".

Son-to-mother violence was common in two-thirds of cases studied, compared with one-third of cases of daughter-to-mother violence. Its occurrence was not always associated with or linked to a domestic-violence background.

A rise in reported cases in Spain had been attributed to more permissive parenting styles, but, in Dr Wilcox's view, this is only one aspect of a complex problem with many roots. Difficulties at school, mental health issues, and the impact of wider society and its "marketisation" are other contributory factors.

A study of older children and adolescents, aged between 11 and 16 years, has found that a sense of wellbeing among boys and girls fell significantly in this age group. Ironically, practitioners are trying to respond and intervene in a time of austerity, with resources and awareness about the issue both lacking, according to Dr Wilcox. This is compounded by the fact that there has been no routine monitoring or measurement, apart from phone helplines for parents.

The British-based Family Lives helpline has found that some one-third of the 80,000-plus calls to it involved a child's physical aggression, she said.

Initiatives

Two initiatives – the nonviolent resistance training programme and Break4change, a similar programme run in Britain – were showing positive results, she said. Parentline Ireland also offers a 10-week course by telephone on nonviolent resistance.

Sweden has implemented similar programmes, while Bulgaria, also part of the research project, has run a police academy for children, which includes talking about child-to-parent violence, said Dr Wilcox.

Senior probation officer Rosemary Fox, who works for the Department of Justice and Equality, said she had heard about

child-to-parent violence only six months ago. She noted that there was no mention of it in the national strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence 2010-2014.

Ms Fox said there was a need for far

greater awareness, planning and a co-ordinated approach, noting she had witnessed "32 agencies going into some houses", with little or no co-ordination between them.

In her view, there is a need to develop further the nonviolent resistance programme on an inter-agency basis, as it is producing results in giving parents the confidence to cope.

The nonviolent resistance programme is a "brief, systemic and cognitive behavioural response" to child-to-parent violence, according to handbook authors Declan Coogan and Eileen Lauster of NUIG.

Core elements

Mr Coogan is project leader for the RCPV project in Ireland and a lecturer in social work at NUIG's school of political science and sociology. Core elements of the programme include a parental commitment to nonviolent resistance, regardless of provocation, development of de-escalation skills, refocusing interactions away from persistent conflict, and development of a support network.

It differs from other parenting programmes in that it involves the parents only, without the necessity to work directly with the child. While the parents are encouraged to seek the views of a son or daughter on resolving conflict, there is no expectation that the practitioner will meet the child.

Significantly, the authors note, a reassertion of parental control or changing a child's behaviour is not the primary goal of the programme. Rather, there is a "shift in emphasis to influencing a change in the relationship between the parent and the child".

See cpv.eu, cpvireland.ie, parentline.ie, parentingni.org



■ Nonviolent resistance programme is a 'brief, systemic and cognitive behavioural response' to child-to-parent violence.

PHOTOGRAPH: THINKSTOCK



Son-to-mother violence is common in two-thirds of cases studied, compared with one-third of cases of daughter-to-mother violence