

# The differences between Parent Conflict and Domestic Abuse

## Parental Conflict

### What is Parental Conflict?

Parental conflict is defined as a situation when arguments and disagreements between parents are frequent and poorly resolved; however, there is not an imbalance of power or fear.

### Indicators of Parental Conflict

- A high degree of anger and mistrust
- Ongoing difficulties in communication and cooperation
- Shouting and swearing between parents
- Loss of focus on the child
- 'Digging in of position' and no ability to compromise, such as micro managing contact and communication
- The child, dependent on age, may be drawn into managing the parent's communication and behaviours

### What threshold is Parental Conflict?

- Parental conflict sits between Tier 1 to Tier 3 (Bedford Threshold Pathway Document)
- Families affected by parental conflict are supported under Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989

### Which Professionals are normally involved in in parental conflict cases?

- Early Help Practitioners or Professionals
- School Based Family Support Workers
- Health Visitors and GP's
- Children Centre Practitioners
- Education Staff
- Housing Officers
- Police

### How are families affected by parental conflict assessed?

- A holistic Early Help Assessment (EHA) is used to help a child receive the right support at an early stage. It enables professionals to efficiently identify the emerging needs of children and young people at risk of poor outcomes; using a holistic team approach, it reduces duplication of assessment and improves involvement between agencies.
- TAF (Team around the Family) meetings are held to bring together all the different agencies and professionals that are working with a child. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals and sharing relevant information with each other.

### Website information, resources and tool kit

[www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/children-and-families/early-help-families/reducing-parental-conflict](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/children-and-families/early-help-families/reducing-parental-conflict)

## Domestic Abuse

### What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic Abuse is defined in law as abusive if both persons are aged 16 or over, are personally connected and the behaviour from one person to the other consists of any of the following: physical and or sexual abuse, violent or threatening behaviour, controlling or coercive behaviour, economical abuse and psychological and emotional abuse.

### Indicators of Domestic Abuse

- Physical violence
- Sexual violence
- Coercive, controlling behaviours (towards a child or an adult)
- Presence of degrading or humiliating behaviours
- Stalking behaviours and 'jealous surveillance'
- Power imbalance
- Threats to kill
- One person may present as genuinely fearful of the other
- A past history of domestic abuse can be an indicator of current behaviour
- Children imitate abusive behaviour
- Financial/Economic Abuse

### What threshold is Domestic Violence?

- Domestic Violence is Tier 4 (Bedford Threshold Pathway Document)
- Families affected by domestic abuse maybe supported under Section 47 of the Children's Act 1989

### Which Professionals are normally involved in Domestic Abuse cases?

- Social Workers
- Police
- Independent Review Officer
- Drug and Alcohol Support Workers
- Crisis Team
- Housing Officers
- Education Staff
- Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)
- Voluntary Sector and Domestic Abuse Professionals

### How are families affected by Domestic Abuse assessed?

- Single Assessment
- The DASH tool (Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Harassment and Honour Based Violence Assessment) is a risk assessment form that is used to work out the risk level for the victim.
- Domestic Abuse cases may also be discussed at MARAC. A MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference) is a meeting where information is shared on the highest-risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of Local Police, Probation, Health, Child Protection, Housing Practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sectors. After sharing all relevant information about a victim, representatives discuss options for increasing safety for the victim and turn these options into a coordinated multi agency action plan. The primary focus of the MARAC is to safeguard the adult victim and child.

### Website information and resources

<https://bedsdv.org.uk>