

May 2020

Child to Parent Violence / Abuse (CPVA) or Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA) are forms of abuse in the home that are becoming more regularly identified and reported. In fact we do not know the true extent of this issue because of its hidden nature and the lack of legislation to tackle child to parent violence.

Shame, embarrassment, and fear of criminalising their child are all reasons why parents who are experiencing CPVA do not seek help. They will often minimise the seriousness of the abusive behaviours and struggle to manage the situation on their own for a long time.

There is little research evidence to support what is effective in tackling this issue, but raising awareness is a critical starting point.

### CPVA can be defined as:

***“Any act of a child that is intended to cause physical, psychological or financial damage in order to gain control over a parent”***

(Cottrell 2001)



### What are the risk factors?

- Cultural and gendered beliefs and attitudes
- Negative life experiences, for example being a victim of physical abuse or experiencing trauma
- Living with domestic abuse, especially when perpetrated by a father
- Learning difficulties and mental health problems
- Parental drug and alcohol abuse
- Problems at school
- Lack of parental presence
- Bi-directional violence (parent to child & child to parent)
- Commercialisation of society and sense of entitlement

### Myth-busting

- *“It’s just teenagers playing up”*  
Abuse can be physical or emotional. Children can control their abusive behaviour in order to control their parents. Parents become fearful to set boundaries due to the response of their child
- *“It’s down to bad parenting”*  
This only plays to the parent (and more often mother) blaming culture and prevents parents from seeking support

# Child to Parent Violence / Abuse

- *“They have the ‘violent’ gene”*  
There is no evidence that violent behaviour is inherited: however, it can be learnt and there is evidence that children using abusive behaviour have often been exposed to domestic abuse
- *“Children who are violent / abusive are victims themselves”*  
Trauma and loss are potential risk factors and need to be addressed with the child. There is often a combination of risk factors
- *“It only happens in lower class, chaotic families”*  
CPVA affects families from wide and diverse backgrounds

## CPVA includes:

- Threats of and/or physical violence including hitting, punching, kicking, pushing, slapping, biting, hair pulling
- Swearing and name calling
- Intimidation
- A constant refusal to do as asked e.g. not going to bed or coming home, refusing to ask their friends to leave, not cleaning up after themselves, not attending school/college/work, refusing to contribute to the household or participate in normal family activities.
- Bullying by text or phone
- Stealing money or property or misuse of parents credit cards /phones / computers
- Deliberate damaging of property
- Threats of or actual violence to pets or other children in the household as a way of intimidation
- Emotional blackmail
- Drug/alcohol abuse in the home
- Belittling parents in front of friends/other family members/public

Where the above would be identified as CPVA would take into consideration the child's age and stage of development. They would also be seen as acts over time rather than a one off refusal/incident.

## What behaviours might you observe in school?

- problematic behaviours towards peers and / or school staff
- non-attendance
- non-engagement with school activity
- substance misuse problems
- bullying
- depression

However, you might also see nothing at all as these behaviours may only present within the family setting.

# Child to Parent Violence / Abuse

**Note:** Many of these behaviours may also identify families where adult domestic violence and abuse and/or child abuse is on-going or has occurred in the past.

Sometimes you will not notice anything in the behaviour of the child, but may instead pick up on things which siblings or parents may say or things which you observe e.g. bruising, scratches, nervousness around the young person, dominating behaviour from the young person towards them etc. Sometimes a parent may mention being scared of upsetting their child/fearful when their child becomes angry as part of formal meetings they are attending. In such cases they need to be reassured and possibly asked to expand upon this using TED questions; support should be identified for them.

## What can schools do if they become aware of CPVA?

- Explain to parents:
  - This is a common problem
  - Help is available
  - It's good to talk about it
  - We want to support you to support your child
- If a member of staff in school has a trusting relationship with the parent, they could speak with the parent and encourage them to access support
- Schools should address CPVA as they would any other safeguarding issue.

## Support and advice:

### Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Hub

- telephone: 0300 123 5101
- text: 07771 941 464
- email: [cedap@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:cedap@cheshireeast.gov.uk)
- for referrals use [cedah@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:cedah@cheshireeast.gov.uk)



## Resources:

The following two resources have been developed in consultation with professionals and families in Cheshire East and can be used by professionals working with the family, or offered as a resource to the families.

[Child to Parent Violence Booklet](#)

[Adolescent Violence to Parents Booklet](#)

The following toolkit has been produced by myCWA to use with parents and

[Child to Parent Violence Toolkit](#)

MyCWA - advice on child/adolescent violence from forensic psychologist

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEbWAAcLmMs&feature=youtu.be>

<http://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/behaviour/teen-violence-at-home/>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/732573/APVA.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732573/APVA.pdf)