

## OF INTEREST

- The next Social Pedagogy Development Network meeting will be hosted by the University of Central Lancashire in Preston on 2nd and 3rd December. The event will focus on ways of developing and taking social pedagogy. Information on this and all SPDN events can be found here: <http://socialpedagogy.co.uk/network.htm>
- Interesting articles from Spring 2015 issues of Foster Care Magazine: a profile of a foster carer who is using the social pedagogic approach. "Looking for the meaning in behaviour rather than reacting to it has made Joy a better parent, she believes. 'It is not that I am less strict but I uphold the boundaries in a less strict way.'" [www.fostering.net/head-heart-hands/articles-blogs](http://www.fostering.net/head-heart-hands/articles-blogs)

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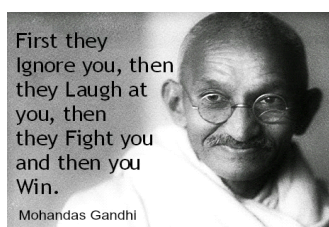
## Non-violent resistance and family relationships

Referrals to Multi Agency Teams (MATs) often come out of the blue and there is a need to quickly build rapport with a young person and their family, seek to understand their situation and consider what support would best help them.

One such example found Leanne, a MAT team member in Swadlincote, with a referral from a local GP for Sam who in the home environment would respond to apparently reasonable requests with rage, throwing objects and causing damage. His parents had suffered bruising and his seven year old brother had also been physically hurt. However, he was not displaying this anger in school and there was no evidence of any mental health disorder. The GP felt that Sam and his family required support to address his increasingly harmful behaviour.

Leanne held discussions with the family regarding the reasons for Sam's anger and though looking at a timeline of events, considered at what point in his life things

changed. It was discovered that since an embarrassing incident when he soiled him-



### Non-violent approaches of protesters such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

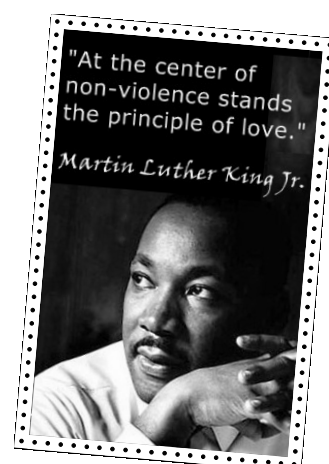
self he had lost the confidence to leave home and would use anger and violence to control the situation. This made it increasingly difficult to get Sam to school.

Leanne is a strong advocate of non-violent resistant (NVR) strategies and saw this as a way she could help the parents redevelop their relationship with Sam. She ensured Sam's uncle, who had a good relationship with both Sam and his parents, was included. She also spoke with school to ensure they were also supportive of Sam and his family.

Non-violent resistance strat-

egies have been developed to target aggressive, controlling and self-destructive behavior in young people. Emerging from the non-violent approaches of protesters such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King, it seeks to avoid reprimands or threats, which only create a similar response and also to avoid acceptance and submission, which reinforces the violent behavior.

Rather it is based on the presence of the parents, who through NVR, shows their child that they will not give up on them or give in to them. It allows them to show both limits and closeness, seeking to curb the violent behavior and express devotion in the same act. (Omer 2004)



## University of Derby Course



There is another opportunity to apply for places on the Introduction to Social Pedagogy

course at the University of Derby starting in January. An email to all staff has been sent

round with the information but if you are interested get in touch at the details on page

## NVR and family relationships...continued

*The change witnessed within the family is notable and the emotional growth of the child is equally heart-warming.*

Archie even returned the gesture by buying his mum some flowers.



Leanne held initial discussions with parents about the importance of parental presence, de-escalation and reconciliation gestures to begin re-building the relationship between Sam and his parents. She worked 1:1 with Sam around his anxiety issues and strategies were put into place to overcome key challenges such as leaving the house on time, only using the toilet a minimal amount before school, going out with friends to play football, going out with his dad for 'special time' and using the bus in a morning.

Sam engaged well and from the first visit the violence soon stopped at home. Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings were held every six weeks with school and the support of the Uncle. The stronger families' safer children grid was used and this enabled Archie to see all of the positives that he was achieving.

Archie did have another outburst which the family feel was a setback. Leanne explained that this was ok

and discussed all of the positives which the family had achieved so far. The family were able to continue to use the NVR techniques successfully to manage the situation and no further outbursts were experienced.

Soon Sam was able to use the school bus which was a huge step for him considering that the short journey to school used to consist of toilet stops along the way at his uncles and grandma's house. Sam has signed up to a school trip on a coach to Amsterdam in the new term which is evidence enough that his confidence in his own abilities has improved. The family used NVR successfully and in return were able to bring calm again to the family. Sam even returned the reconciliation gesture by buying his mum some flowers.

Prior to closing the case the MAT worker visited the home to ensure that the parents felt fully equipped to deal with any future issues. The family were very thankful and felt that they no long-

er needed MAT support as they were fully equipped with the tools for sustainable change.

Upon reflection Leanne felt that the NVR was a powerful tool to use with families that are nearing the thresholds of social care and breakdown. The change witnessed within the family is notable and the emotional growth of the child is equally heart-warming.

Leanne's practice helped the family find a life-space which they could share together, set positive regard at the heart of all interactions and linked into Sam's key family members, supporting the parents and his uncle in become the key social pedagogues in Sam's life. Although developing social pedagogy relationships with young people directly is part of the MAT worker's role, supporting family members to develop their own social pedagogic approach is also vital.

Thanks to Leanne Taylor, [Leanne.Taylor@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:Leanne.Taylor@derbyshire.gov.uk) for this thoughtful practice example.

## Virtual School's creative ways to give voice to children in care



...time to focus on one of social pedagogy's cherished principles: the child's voice.

Derbyshire's Virtual School (VS) aims to enhance the life opportunities for children in care by supporting their education and enabling them to achieve the best they can. Children and Young people remain enrolled at their existing school or setting with the Virtual School offering support, guidance and training, to ensure that educational services are effectively coordinated and that cared for children and young people get the best opportunities to reach their fullest potential.

All children in care have a named Virtual School worker often being the newly created role of Education Support Officer (ESO) working within the Virtual School. The Virtual Head, Kim Brooks leads this innovative team working with foster carers and alongside schools and settings to ensure they provide the best provision for children and young people in our care.

The Virtual School have taken on board the challenges of finding out how social pedagogy fits into their work as an underpinning framework in all that they do and further develop their practice with focused social pedagogy development sessions.

On the return from the school holidays they took time to focus on one of social pedagogy's cherished principles- the child's voice. It can be a difficult one to truly achieve in, finding the best way to engage with children and young people so that they can be heard and really feel that their views are actioned can be hard!

The team explored their own responses to the notions of 'child voice' and the agency (control) this can give a child, during a training day exploring a range of new media approaches: including using photo albums and video capture with children to record both their views and evidence their work and achievements. The new media was a natural for some and a challenge for others but all realised its power to help their work and to ensure the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings were more child focused and celebratory.

All Children in Care of statutory school age must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place within 10 days of coming into care which is reviewed regularly and overseen by the VS. The PEP forms part of the child's care plan helps all those who support the young person (and the young person too) to focus on their education in a targeted fashion, share information and plan how to best meet the young person's needs, ambitions and aspirations.

PEP meetings have sometimes not been conducted in the most helpful way for young people to voice their views. Maybe held in stuffy meeting rooms, with large groups of professionals and carers which can make them daunting. Many children and young people do not attend their PEP meetings for a variety of reasons so through the use of the new media their work and their voice can be taken to the meeting for example on an ipad or laptop to show their work or record their thoughts.

The VS have been developing and challenging the nature of PEP meetings and there have been great strides made in the meeting's effectiveness and inclusion of the children. Ideally this will lead to more children attending some or all of their PEP meeting and if they remain in care, seeing the PEP as their way of having real agency

to steer their route through education and maximise their achievements.

The new media development day helped ESO's to think how they could use technology to support children and young people. From working with very young children to capture work in electronic folders to bring along and help celebrate their achievements, to young people using video media with ESO's, as a common third activity, to build their relationship whilst recording their hopes and views. The VS will be pioneering their newly learned skills to engage with children and young people even more and ensure their voice is heard.

Chloe a Virtual School, ESO said, "I will certainly use what I learned about the ipads to help capture the student's voice, potentially interviewing children and making it into videos with them. I think they would find it interesting and it will help them to say what they really feel."

Find out more about the work of the virtual school: [virtualschool@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@derbyshire.gov.uk)

[www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social\\_health/children\\_and\\_families/children\\_we\\_look\\_after/the\\_virtual\\_school/default.asp](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social_health/children_and_families/children_we_look_after/the_virtual_school/default.asp)

...exploring a range of new media approaches: including using photo albums and video capture with children to record both their views and evidence their work.



[www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/makeyourmark/](http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk/makeyourmark/)

The UK Youth Parliament provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation. Derbyshire Youth Council has four repre-

sentatives elected on to the UK Youth Parliament and works with them to improve things for young people across the UK. Each year the members, along with the other Derbyshire Youth Councilors, run

the Make Your Mark national campaign to elect the top five issues most important to young people nationally. Find out more about how you can get involved by emailing: [youth.council@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:youth.council@derbyshire.gov.uk)



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**“Working together to support  
and inspire children, young  
people and their families to be  
the best they can be; safe,  
health, happy, learning and  
working.”**

### Stay in touch

**If you have any comments about the gazette  
or would like to know more about the devel-  
opment of social pedagogy please feel free to  
get in touch. Also do make contact if you  
would like to highlight your own or colleagues  
work developing social pedagogy.**

Disclaimer: we hope this provides useful and relevant  
information, but we cannot guarantee that all source doc-  
uments referred to have been checked and verified. We  
cannot accept responsibility for actions or omissions taken  
after reading this bulletin. Nothing in this bulletin is intend-  
ed as a substitute for expert, professional or legal advice.

These bulletins can be found  
at: <http://bit.ly/1sYdNIU>

## Steering and Strategy groups

The social pedagogy steering groups seek to bring together passionate practitioners in each service area to ensure social pedagogy develops in all our support for children and young people.

The residential group has been joined last year by the fostering group and more recently a group of youth workers have met to explore the next steps for how their own service area links to social pedagogy approaches.

This model ensure that grass roots workers can influence the change in their service areas and seek to develop , through a social

pedagogy lens, a new view of their own practice and the practice within their service area.

If you are interested in the current groups or in how your service are might organise at the grass roots, get in touch at the details above.

Alongside the steering groups the strategy group met last week. Its role is to develop the strategy to embed social pedagogy in Derbyshire practice , link the service areas together and influence those in management positions to support the development of social peda-

gogy across Derbyshire.

The aim of all the group is to ensure the difficult aspect of running children’s services and its required systems does not disconnect from the children and the young people that we care for and the great workers and carer who care.

