

NVR is a promising way of working

NVR is currently used with success within the different wards and settings of the Bascule. In practice we see a significant reduction in unacceptable behaviour. Also, cooperation between parents and staff improves significantly. Parental Support, receives a lot of attention in NVR. Besides using of NVR on the wards, we offer NVR training to parents so they can apply NVR in their own families.

For more information about Non-violent Resistance, send an email to: nvr@debascule.com.

We also provide training for teams. For information please contact us: 00 31 20 8901000.

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Non-violent Resistance

A new approach in daypatient and clinical treatment



Academisch centrum
voor kinder- en jeugdpsychiatrie

De Bascule

De Bascule is an academic centre for child and adolescent psychiatry, offering a broad range of child and adolescent mental health care within Amsterdam and the surrounding area.

Non-violent Resistance

NVR is a new approach for families where there are problems between parents and children, especially if there is a pattern of violence or dangerous behaviour. NVR was developed in Israel by Haim Omer (professor of Psychology, Tel Aviv University). It is based on the non-violent approaches used by such people as Gandhi, Martin Luther King and even John Lennon.

NVR is used when the parental authority is under pressure and parents begin to feel powerless about the negative cycle which they find themselves in. The child's development is often at a still stand. During an admission to a ward or daypatient centre – the staff responsible for the treatment often take over some of the parental responsibilities. This requires a good working relationship between the staff and parents. Staff can also end up in the same sort of negative spiral. Working together with parents using NVR can help prevent this negative spiral.

NVR is a new way of using parental responsibility. At home the parents do this but in a clinical setting the staff do this working with the parents. The main concepts are:

- increasing parental presence in the clinical setting,
- preventing conflicts escalating,
- using non-violent strategies.

A change in behaviour

The main aim of NVR is a change in behaviour (in the way of doing things and attitude) in the person who is doing the NVR: the aim is therefore that it is the parents and staff who change! The idea is that this way it is possible to influence and change unacceptable behaviour. This can not happen in one step, NVR is no magic solution! When a choice is made to use NVR there is no expectation that violence or aggressive behaviour

shall stop immediately. If there is already a pattern of difficult behaviour (from both sides), then further escalation of the unacceptable behaviour is to be expected. However, due to the decision of the parent or adult to use NVR, this behaviour will have less of an effect. The pattern of escalation is eventually broken.

The principles of a NVR way of thinking

NVR is not just about another way of reacting but also a different way of thinking:

- Having a clear attitude against violence and aggression (unacceptable behaviour).
- Avoiding physical and verbal aggression.
- Respect for the opponent.
- Moral objections to the use of force.
- Realizing that through the use of violence the opponent always grows stronger.
- Understanding that discussion often leads to a worsening of the situation.

To give an idea of NVR, here are some of the important basic principles:

Control over the other is an illusion

Within NVR we assume that we have no control over other people, at best we can hope that we have an indirect influence on the behaviour of others. When we realize we have no control over the behaviour of others, is there more room to watch your own behaviour.

NVR is a fight, not submission

NVR is nonviolent resistance. Someone who uses NVR aims to disrupt unacceptable behaviour. The opponent is often confused with this unexpected reaction to the violent behaviour. A conscious choice is made of how the 'fight' will go, how power will be used and the exact nature of the resistance. NVR is an active process where there is a constant awareness of attitudes and behaviour. In addition, we use some well-defined guidelines.

NVR is based on cooperation

NVR works by cooperation between an adult and

child/adolescent. In the home situation the adult is the parents who are directly involved. On a ward the adult role is undertaken both by staff and parents. Working towards more cooperation means that the adults try to place themselves next to the child/adolescent instead of in opposition. It is important not to think of solutions for the other person, but together try to figure out which solution is desirable for both parties. To promote cooperation requires an active and inquisitive mindset, even if there are sometimes only small starting points. The cooperation enhances the feeling of 'we' and reduces the 'I – you' feeling.

Respect for others

Respect for others is paramount. Respect and reconciliation reinforces positive behaviour and has a de-escalating effect. The purpose of NVR is not to impose your own wishes or even to change the other, but to bring about change in the situation. Even if the stress increases then the 'I vs. you' situation should be avoided.

Verbal persuasion is not an NVR

NVR often begins where verbal discussion no longer works and discussion changes into swearing, threatening and screaming. Within NVR, you use a clear, respectful, non-provocative form of communication and use silence when necessary. The strategic use of silence is a very powerful and effective way of communicating. Often things are said such as: "If you do not immediately stop swearing, then you can go to your room!" This sentence starts an escalation process. What to do if the young person does not go to his room? Using NVR an expectation is expressed: "We expect that you go to your room." Then you keep quiet. A calm tone is used as well as silence. Repeat the message no more than two times. Avoid judgmental comments like "Perhaps you are listening you ..." or "As I just said ...". Return to the incident later when everything is cooled off. Hence the motto:

"Strike when the iron is cold"