

NVR activities in 2016 and outlook for 2017

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Abstract

There has been tremendous growth in the demand for agency-based training in NVR. Engaging in training, conferences, seminars and workshops both in the UK and abroad, and delivering clinics across the country, the institute PartnershipProjects has expanded greatly. Our focus on NVR and trauma in the family appears to meet the therapeutic needs of many service users, as well as the training needs of local authority, independent and health system organisations. Members of PartnershipProjects have made contributions to professional and academic debates with themes ranging from the integration of NVR and Narrative Therapy, to NVR and trauma, developmental trauma and child focused working, as well as the development of the new psychological concepts of 'erasure' and the 'presence mind'.

PartnershipProjects in 2016

We are a systemic training consultancy in the United Kingdom, specialising in Non Violent Resistance and trauma-related work with families, schools and communities. PartnershipProjects delivers training in NVR at foundation level, advanced level and for local supervisors. The organisation now also offers a growing number of NVR clinics in various parts of the country, including London, Birmingham and the Midlands, Bristol and North Somerset, Cardiff and South Wales, Brighton and Sussex, Portsmouth and Hampshire, Poole and Dorset.

2016 saw enormous growth in the demand for agency-based training in NVR in the UK. PartnershipProjects has been training hundreds of practitioners across the country. This is a bottom-up movement: While the government has initially been promoting and funding the development of other approaches, front-line practitioners and parents have spread the word, and local authorities as well as child- and adolescent mental health services have been asking for NVR. The more we train professional colleagues in coaching parents, schools and communities in nonviolence, the more we find that many 'fall in love' with the approach. They find that it speaks to something that is central to their values, and connected to ones deepest wishes for relating to other human beings – while at the same time acknowledging the misuse of power. We are very fortunate to have a large number of very experienced and able colleagues who have delivered training in NVR over the past year: Shila Desai, Ben Shannahan, Michele Dadswell, Diana Alvispalma, Rosemary Baragwanath, Jill Lubienski, Rachael Aylmer and Peter Jakob.

Our institute has entered in a partnership with Interactie Academie Antwerp, where Willem Beckers has been developing a comprehensive NVR training programme. It is a real pleasure to cooperate with Willem, and experience his creative and enthusiastic way of helping families. Interactie Academie and PartnershipProjects have cross-recognised each other's NVR training programmes, and Willem and Peter will carry out training together in both the UK and in Belgium this year.

Another partnership has been struck up with Anderida Adolescent Care in East Sussex, England. Anderida look after some of the most troubled young people in the country, and have developed highly specialised New Authority ways of responding to not only aggressive, but also importantly risk-taking behaviour in the young people they look after. They have also intensified their work with parents on the basis of NVR, and as a result of their palette of interventions are seeing much improvement in key indicators such as reduction in absconding, engagement in education, re-connection with parents and family of origin, and

uptake of individual therapy for the effects of trauma. Kerry Shoesmith and Erica Scott, Directors at Anderida, have both trained to deliver NVR training to professionals, and have completed the first foundation level course for residential services in Oxford.

Apart from delivering NVR training and workshops in European locations such as Switzerland and Austria, Ben Shannahan and Peter Jakob delivered the first comprehensive certificate training course in Canberra, the Australian capital. A group of colleagues around Sel Cooper and Jo Courtney had been delivering NVR based parent groups for four years already, so the certificate training programme met not only with great interest and acceptance, but importantly with a wealth of previous experience. Sel, Jo and their colleagues have shown particular sensitivity to adapting NVR to culture and cultural metaphors, values and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and have taken consideration of their histories of resistance and survival in the face of historic and ongoing experiences of oppression and colonisation. There is a very interesting evaluation of their NVR based parent groups in the Australian Capital Territory and Wagga Wagga (Relationships Australia, 2016). A key theme in their work, which also ran as a red thread throughout the training, was how to bring NVR to the awareness of parents and communities in a way that enables a good fit with their cultural identity, rather than NVR 'colonising' people who have experienced so much colonisation.

We have also seen significant growth in demand for our NVR clinics. Much of the work is with adoptive families. Most adopted children will have experienced developmental trauma, and the UK Government has a special fund for therapies for these families. Research at Bristol University has shown that child-to-parent violence is the single most significant factor in adoption disruption (Selwyn et. al., 2014). Our combined specialisation in NVR and in trauma has enabled us to meet the therapeutic needs of many adoptive families. In addition to the colleagues who also train professionals in working with NVR, some of the most experienced NVR practitioners in the country, Amy Smith, Cathy Coombs, Nicky Maund and Derrie Clark, have been delivering an increasing amount of NVR work in our clinics, and we are very pleased that two recently trained, enthusiastic and very capable colleagues, Georgie Leake and Julie Oates, have just joined our ranks. Whilst fully trained in NVR, all these colleagues come from an array of different background professions, ranging from behaviour specialist, social worker and special needs teacher to clinical nurse specialist, systemic psychotherapist, educational psychologist and clinical psychologist, making this a truly multi-disciplinary group of practitioners.

Members of PartnershipProjects have made contributions to academic and professional debates. Ben Shannahan (2016), a systemic family therapist in London, recently submitted a Masters dissertation on an integration of ideas and practices drawn from Narrative Therapy and from NVR. Peter Jakob's article on nonviolence in the larger systems around traumatised families (2016) has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Family Therapy, and has been posted online. This article represents the culmination of Peter's work around transforming relationships between members of the larger system and family members, so that the nuclear family can become a safer place and thus a recovery environment from trauma. Peter also presented some of these ideas at the 4th International Conference on Non Violent Resistance in Malmo in his keynote address on 'From larger system to child focus: treating trauma with NVR'. At the same conference, Dan Dolberger, Michaela Fried and Peter presented a workshop on the new concepts of 'erasure' and the 'presence mind', which they are developing together. Peter further delivered keynotes and workshops at conferences in Hamburg, Germany – Fachtagung Neue Autoritaet – and in Feldkirch, Austria – Kongress 2016: Voralberger Tage der Neuen Autoritaet. These presentations again centred on a trauma-focused way of using NVR, ranging from the influence of the larger system to a child-focused way of using NVR where there have been difficulties around developmental trauma and attachment. The spirit of both conferences was truly inspiring. While the Hamburg conference, organised by the colleagues at SOS

Kinderdorf around Frank Untiedt, bridged the gap from NVR in the family to a systemic nonviolent perspective of the entire community as well as the social care system, the Feldkirch conference organised by Martin Fellacher of PINA absolutely enthused a huge number of professionals in the Austrian State of Vorarlberg with the ideas embodied in NVR and the New Authority.

At the end of 2016, Rachael Aylmer became the Associate Director of PartnershipProjects. This is a good place to congratulate Rachael on her achievements as an enormously popular and appreciated trainer in NVR across the UK, and her contributions to our field.

Outlook for 2017

Within the not-for-profit organisation NVR UK, we are working together with our colleagues in other training provider groups towards establishing a national accreditation for NVR training courses and NVR practitioners.

Currently, we are exploring the possibility of a larger scale qualitative study of family members' experiences of the NVR process with two partner organisations.

PartnershipProjects will be providing the Institute of (IFT) Family Therapy's first foundation level training in NVR in London. All participants will be eligible to go on to undertake advanced level training on the London Certificate Course.

Again, 2017 will see us providing many agency-based courses in the UK; demand is continuing to increase for NVR training. Some organisations, such as e.g. Derbyshire CAMHS, are developing comprehensive service development strategies based on the implementation of NVR, and we are very glad to be able to contribute to this with our training and consultation. Again, we will be presenting abroad; at an upcoming event in March, Peter will conduct a three-day workshop at the 'School vor Systemische Opleidingen' in Maastricht, Netherlands: 'From victimisation to re-kindling the caring dialogue' and work together with Jan Olthoff, author of the 'Handbook of Narrative Psychotherapy for Children, Adults and Families', which will be published in English this year. This workshop will focus on narrative ideas and dialogical principles in NVR for traumatised young people and multi-stressed families. Another upcoming event is a workshop with the team at 'Poppelgaarden Familiecenter' in Denmark, focussing on relationships within the larger system.

Claudia Schedler, a psychologist who works in the Austrian Vorarlberg province, will deliver a two-day workshop for PartnershipProjects in London from 6-7th April, presenting her inspiring and heart-warming work with New Authority for children and adolescents with learning disabilities in the family, in foster care and in residential care. Not to forget her 'co-presenter' "Oops"!

Upon reading the final draft of this contribution to the N.A.N.I. newsletter, many voices articulated the need to express our appreciation for our admin team in PartnershipProjects, without whom none of the above could have been achieved. Gabrielle Stirling, Julie Shergold and Linda Heng-Nellis are the key supporters who make our work possible, and I would like to thank them most sincerely for this.

My own New Year's resolution: to finish presentations, rather than run out of time halfway through. Hold me to it.

Peter Jakob

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