

# Relationships Matter 2019

## Conference Evaluation Summary



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# **Relationships Matter 2019**

The Healthy Relationship Partnership held its annual conference #RelationshipsMatter2019 on 15th February 2019. RM2019 continued the work started by last year's #ThroughTheirEyes campaign, which set out to raise awareness of the impact of inter-parental conflict on children amongst parents and professionals. This year we focused on supporting professionals to have the skills and confidence to recognise and respond to relationship distress with new parents and parents caring for with children with additional needs.

Hartlepool practitioners looked at the national research from the Early Intervention Foundation (Harold, 2016) and OnePlusOne (Reynolds, Houlton and Coleman, 2014) which tells us that these parents can find themselves at greater risk of experiencing relationship distress and recommended that the 2019 campaign should focus on enabling stronger relationships to help prevent problems occurring.

In 2018 parents who helped with our community research told us that they were more likely to talk about any difficulties in their relationships with people in the community they already had regular contact with rather than approaching specialist relationship services for help. So, this year's campaign responds to that by focusing on giving Health Visitors, Community Nursery Nurses and other community based practitioners the skills and tools they need to be able to feel confident in supporting parents to have a helpful conversation about relationship quality.

The conference brought together national speakers and local stories of practice as well as the chance for attendees to develop their practical skills through a range of workshops. In this report we will provide a summary of the feedback we received as part of our evaluation of the event. A big thank you to all attendees who gave us feedback!

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**Research and Development Lead**  
**Healthy Relationships Partnership**



## **Aims:**

The conference had three aims:

- to raise awareness of the need to support the couple relationship, especially for new parents and those parents caring for a child with additional needs
- to help increase the capacity of frontline staff to assess the quality of the couple/parental relationship and to confidently offer helpful interventions to reduce the potential for parental conflict
- increase the use of the resources available to support practitioners and parents to address relationship difficulties

## **Attendees:**

The conference welcomed 85 attendees from 28 organisations including the local authority, voluntary sector, schools, health and police.

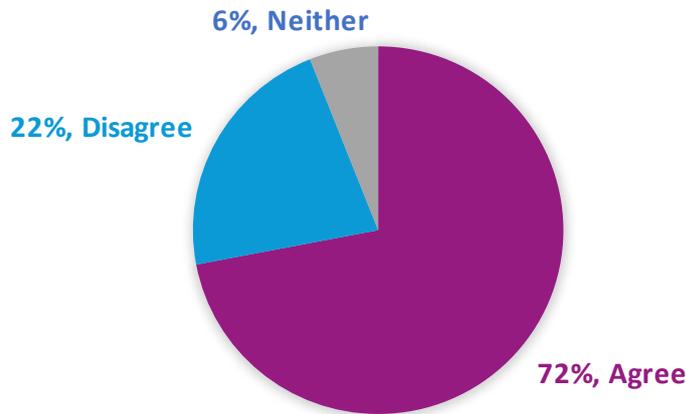
Of the attendees that completed evaluations of the day:

- \* 17% School Staff
- \* 11% Health Visitors
- \* 11% Parents
- \* 6% Local Authority Early Help Practitioners
- \* 6% Community Nursery Nurses
- \* 6% Early Help Management
- \* 6% Counsellors
- \* 3% Family Support Practitioners (Non-Local Authority)
- \* 3% Student Nurses
- \* 3% Social Workers
- \* 3% Youth Managers
- \* 3% Employment Advisor
- \* 25% Other

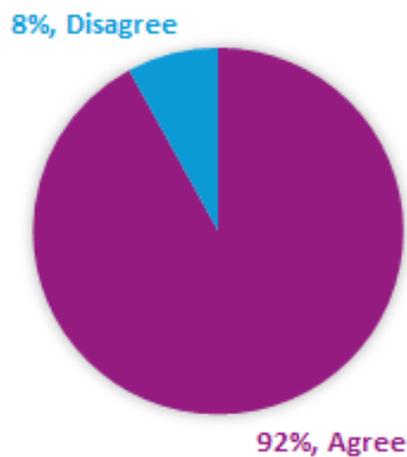
## **Evaluation Feedback:**

This following pages of this report present feedback was gathered from questionnaires completed by attendees on the day.

**“IN MY ROLE I CURRENTLY WORK TO STRENGTHEN THE QUALITY OF THE PARENTAL COUPLE RELATIONSHIP...”**



**“AFTER TODAY I WILL INCLUDE WORK TO STRENGTHEN THE QUALITY OF THE PARENTAL COUPLE RELATIONSHIP...”**



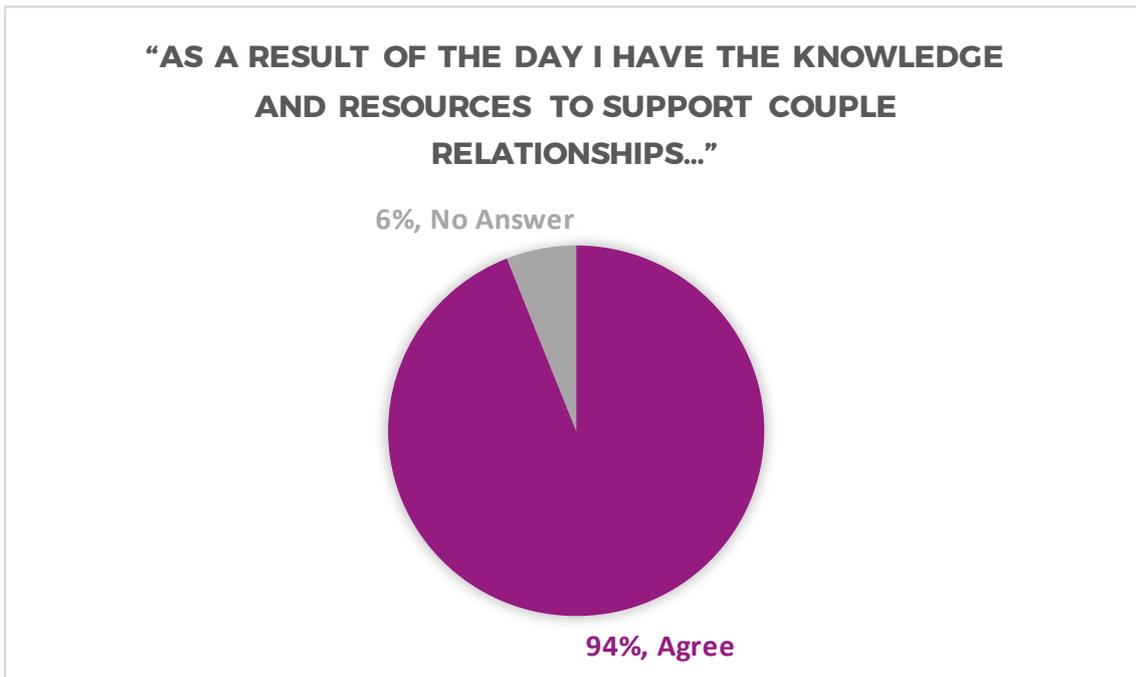
**“IF YES, HOW? IF NO, WHY NOT?”**

**YES:**

- Sharing learning with others
- Helping others understand the impact of parental conflict
- Building on current skills and developing tools to support and enable families
- Keeping the parental couple relationship as part of assessment and intervention
- Using the Relationships Matter 2019 tools in practice
- Making families aware that I can offer relationship support
- Being brave with families
- Changing audits and supervision to support with parental relationships
- Ensuring parental conflict/relationships are a main strategic priority

**NO:**

- Working with parental relationships isn't within the remit of my role (2 School Staff and 1 Counsellor)



**“DID WE ACHIEVE THE AIMS OF OUR CONFERENCE?”**

**100%** of respondents agreed the conference met the aims set out at the beginning of this report.

**“TODAY I LEARNED...”**

- Hartlepool is making good progress in enhancing relationships within families
- More information about the work that's been happening locally
- About the impact of parental relationships on children
- Use of early intervention for parental conflict
- How to use tools in relationships building
- Open questions and active listening
- More about reflecting on practice as a worker
- Changing approach, voice, tone and words can help situations improve
- About additional services that can support and ideas around how to develop services we offer more
- It's okay to argue, that it is a healthy part of relationships but it is the level and type and repair after arguing and recognising that's important
- Parental conflict is normal and if relationships are discussed by all agencies we will remove the stigma
- Wider perspective of how the How To Argue Better course works
- Different training opportunities available
- Information about EPEC

### **“BEST THING ABOUT THE DAY...”**

- The overall day
- Informative and practical content
- Depth of information
- The drama experience, being able to see yourself in the position of the practitioner
- Thinking of ways to embed healthy relationships into my role/organisation
- Hearing about how ‘normal’ parental conflict is (especially after a baby is born) and the tools available to discuss this with families
- Networking opportunity and enthusiasm of all involved
- Listening to a range of professionals on how working in partnership supports parents and relationships
- The tips and awareness of how to negotiate stages and changes of relationships
- Speakers
- Meeting parents who have trained in EPEC
- Meeting others who can support us to develop services for families and young people

### **“SOMETHING I’D CHANGE...”**

- More workshops
- Content more geared to schools/education
- More interaction
- More about the strategies learnt in EPEC training
- Comments in relation to the facility (parking and layout of the room)

The majority of comments giving feedback around changes that could be made also stated that these things didn’t take away from the experience of the day overall.

# References

Cramphorn, K. (2018) Parents' views on relationship support in Hartlepool. Retrieved from <http://hrphartlepool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Parents-views-on-relationship-support-in-Hartlepool-2018-report-final-draft.pdf>

Harold, G., Acquah, D., Sellers, R., Chowdry, H., & Feinstein, L. (2016). What works to enhance inter-parental relationships and improve outcomes for children.

Reynolds, J., Houlston, C., & Coleman, L. (2014). Understanding relationship quality. London: Oneplus One.

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