



Addressing parental conflict effectively with Black, Asian and minority ethnic families

Leandra Box and Maryam Chowdhry

Today's session....

- What we delivered
- Our approach
- Who we reached
- What we learnt: successes and failures
 - Learning for local authorities
- The impact of this project: what parents said
- Future plans



SFSC
Stronger Relationships

Challenge Fund 2: What did we deliver?

six week online
programme
776 parents/carers



13 week in person
programme
133 parents



Parenting plan workshop
16 parents

Online Delivery

Session 4: Parenting Together

START SESSION

To begin, click on "Start lesson" above.

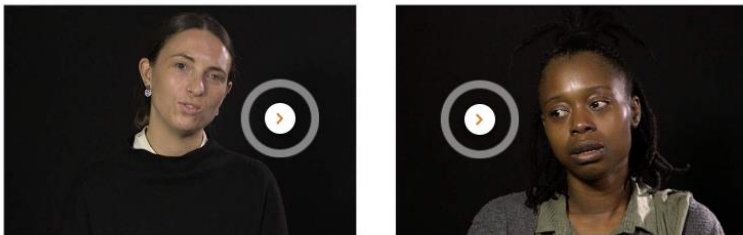
- Let's get started
- The value of community
- Circles of support and interdependence

You make me sick! You are always late- you just don't care!

Using 'you' statements can sound like an accusation and can trigger an argument

During a heated exchange in person, on the telephone or by email or text, it is okay to take a breath to allow yourself and your co-parent a chance to calm down.

Below the videos talk about positive child focused communication to resolve issues:



Tips for managing conflict

1. Try to really listen to what the other person is saying and understand their perspective.
2. Take a breath to stay calm- you do not need to respond immediately.
3. Explain your thoughts, feelings and opinion by using an 'I' or 'we' statement. Try working on one issue at a time, starting with the one you think is most important.
4. Work through different options to find a solution- an apology for your own behaviour or forgiveness for your co-parent's behaviour will help this process. Remember this is about your child and what's best for them.
5. Accept that there are some things you can't change (like the past) and let these things go.

Co-parenting in different households and disagreeing is tiring and stressful. Taking regular steps to relax and have time away from this stress is important and allows you to recharge your batteries emotionally and mentally.



In-person delivery



Say it your own way workshops

Unhealthy roles for children



The Spy 'What did mummy do all day while daddy was at work?'



The Carer 'It's okay dad. I didn't want to go to that party and leave you on your own'



The Judge 'He wants a new bike!' And you and your brother need new shoes. It's just not right is it?'



The Messenger 'Can you let mum know if (+) you are coming to auntie's house with us?'



The Mediator 'I don't think mum meant it like that'



What's near your Mum's?

Describe Mum's neighbourhood



What's near your Mum's house?

Is this neighbourhood safe?

What do you like to do? Where do you go?
Are there places to hang out?

Draw or write a map or guide to this neighbourhood.



Factsheet Stronger Relationships Parenting Plan Workshops

As a parent who has completed either our 'Stronger Relationships' or 'Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities' in-person or online programmes, we are inviting you to our parenting plan workshops, together with your co-parent.

What happens at Dad's?

Who does what at Dad's house?



Do you have your own door keys?



Who says what clothes to wear?
Who buys your clothes?



Do you get pocket money or an allowance?



Who decides when you can and can't go out and your curfew?



Who decides who you hang out with?

What else?



Who does the cleaning?



Who pays the bills?

Do your boundaries feel right?



Who gets food ready?





What were our expected outcomes for parents



Understanding what harmful conflict is and why it happens



Understanding how harmful conflict impacts children's wellbeing



A reduction in frequency and intensity of conflict

Our approach

Tailored support based on evidence about the experiences of minority ethnic parents and what works

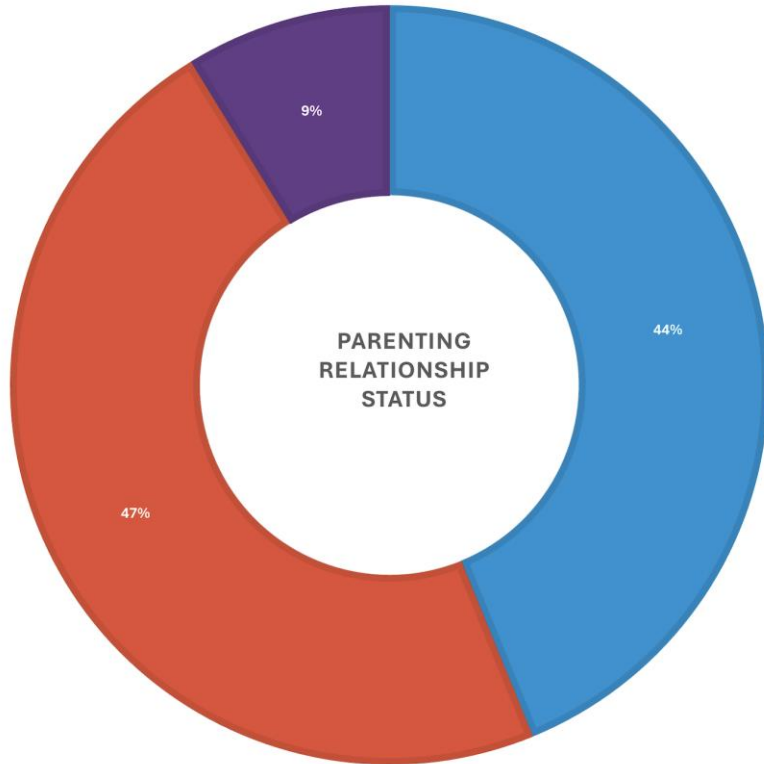
strengthening
families
strengthening
communities

Partnership approach with VCSE partners and workshop co-design

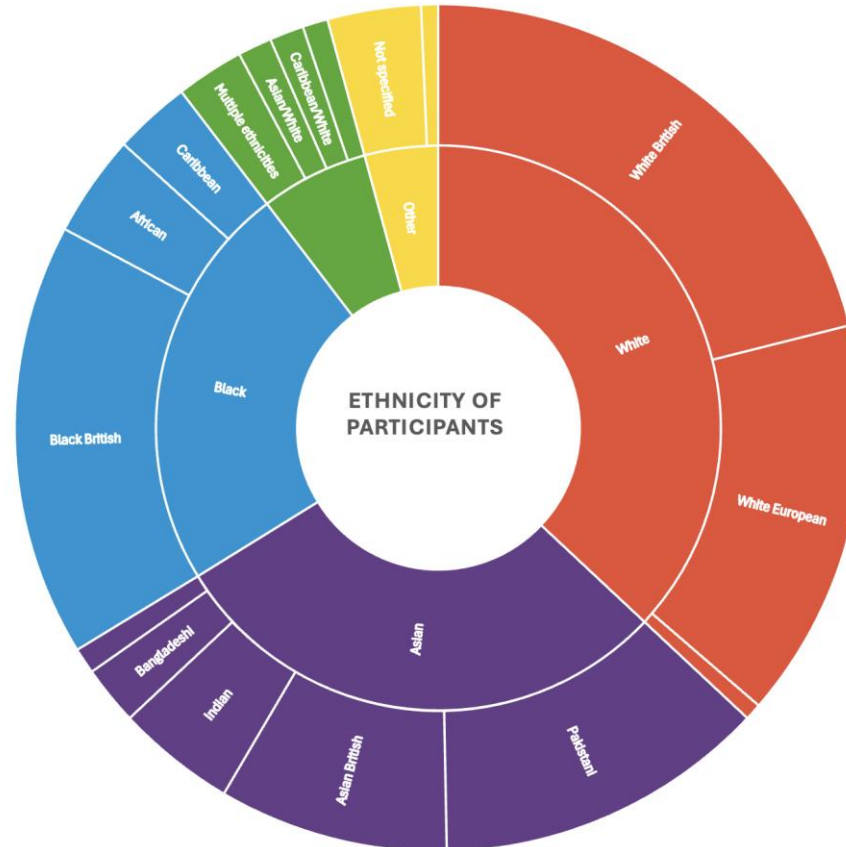
Testing, learning, ammending

Who did we reach?

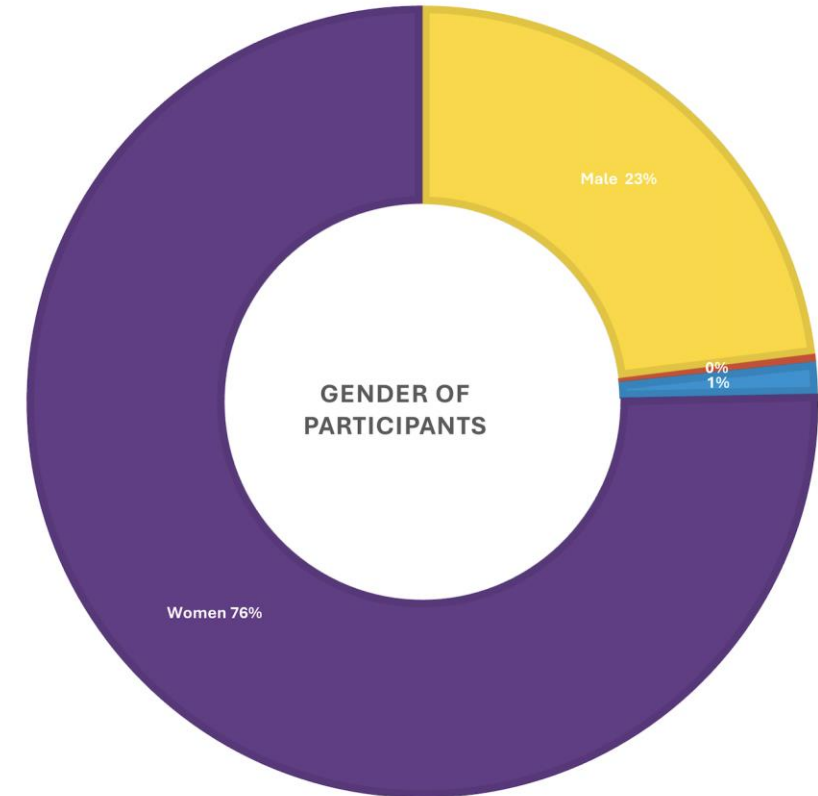
ETHNICITY



RELATIONSHIP STATUS



GENDER



And where?



What did we learn?

The Role of VCSE organisations, especially by and for groups

- Faith-based and community organisations play a crucial trusted role in engagement
- And were well placed for in person targeted programmes (eg. language delivery)
- Resourcing and support for these organisations is essential

Learning for local authorities → Build relationships and trust

- Consider commissioning services:
 - Voluntary and community sector are crucial partners in reaching minoritised communities.
 - Interventions tailored to the communities you serve
- Collaboration with schools, early help teams, and local organisations to reach co-parents experiencing conflict

What did we learn?

Accessibility and delivery flexibility

- In person delivery in demand for specific group like community language speakers
- Mixed methods for online delivery with identified practitioner enhanced engagement (self-study combined with facilitated group sessions).
- Importance of being responsive to need (gender, subject, language, time specific sessions)

Learning for local authorities → Flexible service models improve reach

- Online courses provided convenience, while in-person sessions helped those with digital or language barriers - integrate both methods into family support strategies.
- Online courses without dedicated support attached are likely to lead to low participation and completion rates
- Commission services that can offer flexible delivery and complement LA provision

What did we learn?

Challenges....

- Digital literacy and language barriers hindered some parents' online engagement.
- Stigma and poor past experience with services makes for reluctant participants.
- Recruitment through social media was less effective than traditional methods
Parents' external stressors (financial hardship, court cases, housing instability) affected attendance and completion rates.

Learning for local authorities → Barriers to engagement must be addressed

- One model does not fit all
- Providing childcare, meals, and flexible scheduling enables more parents to participate → think resources and need and whether this is a service better provided by commissioning.
- Targeted outreach is needed to engage diverse communities effectively.

What did we learn?

Our theory of change

- Parents (including those we sometimes think of as hard for us to reach) will explore their adult relationships when the focus is on improving outcomes for their children
- Trusted relationships are key
- Using the SFSC approach we were able to increase cooperation and communication between co-parents and enhance conflict resolution skills, reducing stress in families

Learning for local authorities → Investment is key

- Support the voluntary and community sector as partners, and identify what services are best provided in-house and what can be commissioned and delivered by expert providers.
- Continued investment in RPC interventions could prevent escalation to more costly services (e.g., family courts, social services).

Impact on parents

I never realised that the course had such a positive impact on me. In situations where I would usually lose my cool and overreact when my co-parent provoked me, I now remain calm and focused on our child.

The course has been invaluable to me and my partner, and I feel it has quite possibly saved our marriage and changed our children's lives.

I picked up new ideas for how to approach communication with my co-parent during a difficult divorce, and I learned techniques for teaching and guiding my children.

It's not about placing blame. It's about helping parents understand how arguments affect their children and learning healthier ways to handle conflict.

The facilitator gave us practical advice, like using co-parenting apps or setting up a separate email account. As a newly divorced mum, I had no idea how helpful small steps like that could be.

I had several lightbulb moments, especially about the impact of conflict on children and how small changes can make a big difference.

Get in touch...



If you want to get in touch to find out more or to discuss commissioning training or delivery, or a license for the online course, drop us a line:

- Leandra@racefound.org.uk
- Maryam@racefound.org.uk
- www.strengthening-families.net/reducing-parental-conflict/
- www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/sfsc