



# Raising Awareness

Responding to Child to Parent Violence:  
European Perspectives – Bulgaria

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the Daphne Programme of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the National Association XX1 Rhodope Mountain Initiative, Bulgaria and Brighton & Hove City Council, England and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission. 2015.



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### Introduction

This leaflet captures key learning gained through Smolyan's approach to raising awareness about Child to Parent Violence (CPV) at a municipal and national level in Bulgaria. This learning is drawn from a facilitated discussion in Valencia in October 2014 between the English and Bulgarian partners. These were professionals who had identified CPV as an important social issue and decided to work together to address it.

### Top Tips for Awareness Raising

Before you begin to work with or publicise the issue of CPV make sure you have a clear understanding of what CPV constitutes. CPV is a hidden social issue which is often misunderstood and currently there is no universally agreed definition. It is also important to include researchers in your team to determine the definition of CPV as explained by local people and to help develop the methodologies that would be best to use when working with families affected by the problem.

The definition below will help you agree which aspects you identify with in the contexts faced in your region or country:

...“any act of a child that is intended to cause physical, psychological or financial damage in order to gain control over a parent.” (Cottrell, B, 2001).

- It is important to identify the age range of the children you are working with and any legislation or policy that might be relevant - these will be within the areas of child protection or family/domestic violence and/or parenting.
- Take time to think through the implications of discussing CPV and which organisations need to be part of the discussion.
- Make sure that there is a core of people and organisations prepared to discuss the issue and think through what CPV is and its impacts and are, at least in the first instance, prepared to raise the issues.
- If you are not sure what to do, seek out key people and organisations that might be sympathetic to the issues and start to raise awareness through a range of discussions.
- Work with peers in a number of organisations based in the local area and make sure you network effectively in small cities.
- Make sure you discuss and learn about the issue from more informed people whether locally based in your area, municipality, city, country or within Europe. For example the project trained 30 employees of RD SP, District Police Directorate, psychologists and educators to raise awareness of CPV issue. This has meant that more social workers, the police and NGOs are now aware of the issue
- As you network, identify people who will understand the issues and help you link to appropriate people, resources, policy makers, legal details and to start building a database of stakeholders..
- It would be helpful to run a national survey on CPV and develop a national database that highlights information on past research, monitoring data and support information on interventions to help families and professionals.

## Bulgaria – Learning gained through the RCPV project

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- Make sure you listen to what people are saying about CPV and ensure they understand what you are doing. Many people may not initially understand the issues associated with children who are abusive to their parents. You need to think through why this might be and be prepared to respond sensitively to fears and concerns.
- Make sure that people realise that you still want to make sure that children are brought up in safe and supportive households.
- Ensure that if you are raising the issue of Child to Parent Violence that you also tell people from organisations that are not directly associated with domestic violence, safety or child or adult services; you never know who might be prepared to help.
- Once you have a core of people and organisations interested and committed to working on this topic you might want to set up a more formal network. E.g. In October 2014, Bulgaria carried out a round table with representatives of 25 government and non-governmental organisations to raise awareness of CPV problem
- Ensure that any network you set up has a clear purpose, aims and objectives in order to see effective developments. Structures and systems are critical and therefore you need to find the appropriate people and agencies that are prepared to participate and discuss how CPV fits within current systems and also what needs to change.
- Make sure that you identify appropriate media awareness and build up your resources such as media clips.  
- Bulgaria see this as important and want to contribute to national media radio spots – in this case it is important to develop key messages on CPV that anyone being interviewed can draw on. It is useful to develop accessible leaflets explaining what CPV is.
- Work with schools and pupils to build understanding of CPV. In Bulgaria the school system has developed special hour-long classes that focus on particular social issues. The Rhodope Mountain Initiative are highlighting CPV in those classes so that young people understand what this type of behaviour involves and why it is not helpful. E.g Rhodope Mountain Initiative organised a Day against Violence at the School "Yuri Gagarin" and the main subject area covered was CPV.
- Teachers will need some training and support to understand the difference between anti-social/bullying behaviour and those children who are being abusive to their parents.
- Be prepared to look at mediation and psychological support needs within families
- You also need to be prepared to work with and explain how parents can recognise CPV and explain how best to support change and support families coming to terms with this phenomenon.
- As you develop the work on CPV think about preventative education programmes with children and parents that you can run. Remember that if people understand what the issue is then they can develop networks to address this issue.
- Try and keep your approaches practical to help and support families to address CPV.
- Make sure you constantly reflect on your practice as this will help you learn and develop examples of good practice relevant to your country.

### References:

Cottrell, B. (2001) Parent abuse: The abuse of parents by their teenager children. Ottawa, Canada: Health Canada, Family Violence Prevention