**Advice for Parents Experiencing CAPVA\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**If you are experiencing violence or abuse from your child/young person, it may be hard to admit that there is a problem, but if your child/young person is being abusive or violent towards you, then this is unacceptable.**

**Look after yourself**

This is vital to cope with the anger and aggression from your child/young person. You probably feel exhausted, demoralised and are likely to be making huge efforts to get a tiny amount of control.

**This is not your fault**

No parent can avoid making mistakes, life itself is an imperfect process full of disappointments, and difficulties and children need to be able to cope with these.

**Choose your battles**

You can’t tackle everything at once, put some issues on the back-burner to be dealt with later.

**Try not to take it personally**

If your child is struggling, it’s often because of a range of issues that may have been beyond your control. Once you are aware of them, you can give the support and help to address their fears and worries.

**Separate the behaviour from your teen**

You can still love your teen but not like their behaviour. Use language that separates the behaviour from your teen - Use ‘I statements’ that really do make a difference: for example “I feel hurt when I’m called names because I don’t feel loved and respected”. Repeating this, and being consistent in using it, works.

**Avoid using language that blames and is negative.**

**Ignoring the behaviour won’t make it go away**

If it is not addressed, the violence or abuse could increase and become a life-long pattern; help them break the pattern.

**Keep yourself safe**

Keeping yourself and others around you safe from harm is so important. If you can spot the signs that your child/young person’s behaviour is escalating and could become violent, take steps to protect and keep yourself and others within your household safe. A safety plan will support you in doing this. If you feel you or any member of your household is in danger and/or at risk of harm, call the police - 999.

**Calling the police**

You may feel reluctant to call in the police as you may not want your child to get into serious trouble or for other reasons. The police have been working with many families on adolescent to parent violence and abuse and understand the impact. If you are in fear for your safety or you are feeling threatened it is ok to call the police to help diffuse the situation and for you to feel safe.

**Communication aids**

Can be helpful if the young person has a disability that impacts on their communication.

**Redress the balance**

Often the only attention you will be giving your child/young person is in response to negative behaviour. If you feel able to, find moments where you can show your appreciation when they are doing well.

**Be aware of your own responses and reactions to conflict**

You might be inflaming the situation without meaning to, for example, by shouting or responding back with aggression. Keep yourself calm. Leave the room for a while if you need to.

**Acknowledge their feelings**

“I know you’re really angry”, recognises the fact without criticism. “What would help you now”, offers support but does not have to be agreed to, as does, “I’ll see what I can do and we’ll talk about it later”. A gentle look, a kind touch can convey this without hostility and before trying to talk about what is wrong.

**Don’t fight fire with fire**

Never use violence with your child/young person. If you are hitting your teenager in response, then you are giving them the message that it is OK to use violence to solve disagreements.

**Try to find the root of the anger**

School pressures, bullying, friendships, mental health, family breakdown, illness can all be trigger factors that add to a child’s stress levels. They are not excuses but may be reasons for it.

Talking through the pressures, listening to your teen attentively, without judging, interrupting or directing them can help them to offload their feelings and release the pressure constructively.

Help them develop self-strategies – Helping your teen to understand the triggers and what to do when they are angry is crucial to help them overcome this. When things are calm, have a chat and find out what they think would work for them. It may be a case of trial and error but it is good to help them manage their emotions and find a different outlet for their angry feelings. They might want to use calming down strategies for their anger or an alternative option is meditation to help them quieten down their mind.

Let them know that you are there for them.

**Give them space**

Recognise that your child/young person is taking anger out on you and may not know how else to deal with difficult feelings. Once they have calmed down, you may be able to talk to them about what has happened and suggest they let you find them some help. This is especially important for young people with autism, sensory overload and disruption to routine can be a trigger.

**Get support for yourself**

Know what support you need, speak to friends and relatives to get the best fit that you can.

**Seek support from school**

Is the aggressive behaviour displayed there too? The pastoral team may be able to support with strategies used in school which will also give a clear consistent message to the young person.