

How to Argue Better

session guide

**Practitioner
Toolkit**



CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Using the session plans	4
Sample session plan 1: semi-supported by practitioner	6
Sample session plan 2: fully supported by practitioner	13
Sample session plan 3: group sessions	26
Skills for practitioners and facilitators	33
Key messages for parents	35
Promoting the sessions	36
Additional resources	38
Sources and further reading	39

INTRODUCTION

About this session guide for practitioners

This session guide is for practitioners delivering the *How to Argue Better* digital intervention. It is designed to be used alongside the [Practitioner Guide](#) to help you deliver the resource with confidence to the parents you are working with.

To use the material you will need an active license to the *Getting on Better* package. This could be through your family hub or an umbrella organisation such as an NHS trusts or local authority.

In this session guide, you will find information on:

- Introduction to *How to Argue Better*.
- How to prepare for sessions with parents.
- How to use session plans, including additional support resources.
- Post-session tasks.
- Sample session plans for one-to-one and group sessions.
- A reminder of core skills for delivering the resources to parents.
- How to promote *How to Argue Better*.

About OnePlusOne

Expertise in relationships and getting on better

OnePlusOne is a leading research and innovation charity with over 50 years' experience in relationship science. We bring together teams of relationship experts, researchers, psychologists and frontline practice specialists to create innovative resources that help people develop, maintain and strengthen their relationships.

About *How to Argue Better*

How to Argue Better is an online resource designed to help parents manage their stress and develop communication skills that support their relationship and their children.

Using the session plans

A guide for using *How to Argue Better* with parents

How to use digital interventions with parents

How to Argue Better is a flexible tool that can be used in different settings, either as a universal self-directed online intervention, or as a blended approach with practitioner support. The material can also be delivered in group settings, virtually or in-person.

In the next section, you will find a series of sample session plans to help you structure your sessions with parents. These are offered as a guide. You will find your own way of working with the intervention, and tailoring the material to the needs of the parents you are working with.

Before you begin delivering sessions to parents, please make sure that you:

- ✔ Have completed the four *Getting on Better* e-learning modules.
- ✔ Are familiar with the digital intervention, the online practitioner guide, and additional resources provided by OnePlusOne.
- ✔ Have read this session guide fully.
- ✔ Have received further guidance and support from your manager or team who are trained in supporting families and delivering interventions to parents.
- ✔ Reach out if you need any additional support from OnePlusOne.
- ✔ Are up to date with your organisation’s safeguarding measures.
- ✔ Have undertaken additional training on domestic abuse and are familiar with relevant screening methods and referral pathways within your organisation.

Who can deliver *How to Argue Better*



Any practitioner can signpost and refer.



Delivered only by practitioners who have completed OnePlusOne’s e-learning, and with the appropriate skills and support.



A note on domestic abuse

OnePlusOne's digital interventions are designed to be used in preventative and early intervention settings. They are not suitable where conflict is deeply embedded or where domestic abuse has been identified. Please make sure you are familiar with your organisation's inhouse DA/DV training and pathways, and have completed the e-learning module on the differences between parental conflict and domestic abuse. You can find further information on the [government's website](#). When working with families in conflict, it's important to maintain a professional curiosity. If you notice any signs of domestic abuse, follow your organisation's policies and practices.



A note on evaluations

OnePlusOne is an applied research organisation. We conduct ongoing evaluations and have a process in place for continuous improvement of services based on feedback and effectiveness.

If you want to receive accurate data about how the intervention is being used in your area, it is important that practitioners encourage parents to complete the pre- and post-test questionnaires. These are built in to the course and parents will be prompted to complete them as they progress through.

When running group sessions, practitioners will need to take additional steps to ensure evaluations are completed (see *Group sessions*). Accurate data enables commissioning organisations to better understand and support their service users, while gaining the evidence required to make strategic choices.

The data is only ever as good as the completions, so we encourage you to make every effort to ensure that parents use their own accounts and don't skip the questionnaires.

Sample session plan 1

Semi-supported by practitioner

The semi-supported approach is recommended for *How to Argue Better*. Parents are introduced to the resource by a practitioner who offers guidance and proposes a way of working with the material. Practitioners will have regular check-ins with the parent or the couple over a period of time.

Course title	How to Argue Better
Method of delivery	Blended approach – individual or couple works through the intervention independently, but with structured support and guidance from practitioner with regular check-ins, ideally spread over five sessions.
Learners	Parents who are in a relationship with their child’s other parent. For targeted work, parents who are experiencing significant stress, have poor relational skills, or are engaging in conflict that is frequent, hostile, intense, and poorly resolved.
Learner objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To raise awareness of parental conflict and its impact on children. ● To increase parents’ capacity to cope with stress together. ● To support parents to develop skills to manage their conflict more constructively.
Session duration	This session plan is based on five one-to-one 30-minute check-ins by a practitioner with a parent or couple. Additionally, parents will need to spend three 30-minute blocks independently working through the course. Total practitioner time commitment is approximately 2hrs 30mins, and parents will need approximately 4hrs.
Equipment and material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Device for practitioner. ● Device for parent to create their own account (a computer, tablet, or smartphone). ● <i>How to Argue Better</i> flyer with QR code to access parent registration website (optional). ● <i>Getting on Better</i> cards (optional).
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be clear about your role in working with the parent. ● Where relevant, review referral information, check eligibility and background history, identify any risks involved and be aware of other services accessed, or other teams and partners that the parent may be working with. ● Consider the length of session you will need and adjust accordingly, based on additional topics or activities you may be covering with the parent, eg other assessments, tools. ● To deliver <i>How to Argue Better</i> using a blended approach, make sure you have completed all the required training and preparation tasks. Please refer to the Practitioner Guide for more information. ● Set up your own <i>Getting on Better</i> practitioner account and familiarise yourself with <i>How to Argue Better</i>.

Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Set up an initial meeting with the parent, with a view to organising four subsequent sessions. Ensure the location is quiet and free of distractions. The parent may not have any knowledge of the resource, so you can use the start of the session to build connection and interest.● Make sure the parent will have access to Wi-Fi or mobile data. If connectivity is an issue, you may need to hotspot them or find a location to meet with free Wi-Fi, eg a family hub.● Be prepared with any toolkits or conversation starters, such as relevant <i>Getting on Better</i> cards.● Depending on their circumstances, be aware of any support organisations you may need to signpost the parent to.● Confirm parental consent for involvement and be ready to explain confidentiality and data sharing protocols.● Prior to your meeting, check if the parent might require any extra support (due to additional needs, language, accessibility, disability) and make plans for adjustments as necessary.● Be aware of your organisational policies and guidelines around confidentiality, safeguarding, domestic abuse, etc.
--------------------	--

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts	Additional notes
30 mins	<p>Session 1</p> <p>Practitioner and parent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greet parent, introduce yourself and check in on how they are. ● Engage the parent at an appropriate moment. ● Introduce <i>How to Argue Better</i>. ● Tell them why the course would be helpful. Acknowledge and normalise some of the challenges of being a parent, go over the course objectives, or share an anonymised case study of how the course helped another client or service user. ● Offer a suggested structure, an idea of the time commitment, and an idea of your involvement. ● If the parent is happy to proceed, help them find the registration website. Either provide the URL or use a flyer with QR code. ● Help the parent create an individual account using their own device. ● Get them to log in and show them how the dashboard and digital interface works. ● Choose <i>How to Argue Better</i> and help them to complete the pre-course questionnaire. ● Introduce the first section, 'Understanding Stress'. This section raises parents' awareness about the source of their stress and how it can affect their relationship. You may want to watch the first video together. ● Tell them there will be some questions to answer at the end of each module. ● Establish a timeframe for them to complete the first section. ● Tell the parent they will notice improvements when they intentionally set goals and practice the skills they are learning, even when the other parent is not taking part in the intervention. ● Mention that you will review the first section with them when you next meet. ● Affirm their intention to do the best for their relationship and for their children. ● Signpost to other relevant services if necessary. ● Confirm date for second meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Think of ways to engage parents. Focusing on stress is often easier for parents than talk-ing about what is happening in their relationship. You could say something like, '<i>What kind of things are causing you stress at the moment? How do you and your partner tend to cope with stress?</i>' Questions like these can create opportunities to emphasise how stress impacts our relationships, and the importance of the parental relationship for children. You can say that this resource is designed to support parents in their relationship, giving practical strategies to cope with stress. ● You can show them a video or two from your own account to give them a taster of the content, but make sure they create their own account to do the course. ● You could use a <i>Getting on Better</i> card to introduce some of the ideas, eg <i>The Balance of Stress</i>, <i>Sharing the Load</i> or <i>Conflict Styles</i>.
30 mins	<p>Complete Section 1</p> <p>Parent</p>	<p>Parent completes the first section, '<i>Understanding Stress</i>', in their own time.</p>	

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts	Additional notes
30 mins	<p>Session 2</p> <p>Practitioner and parent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check in with parent and remind them how much time you have together, eg 30 mins. ● Find out how they got on with <i>How to Argue Better</i>. ● Recap main points and learning from the first section, 'Understanding stress'. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you discover about stress and how it impacts you? • What are your current demands and resources? • What are your current sources of inside and outside stress? • Was there any change or learning that you might implement? ● Encourage discussion around any of the main themes that came up for the parent or couple. ● Use your practitioner skills to tune in, listen, and support the parent. ● Introduce the second section, 'Coping with stress together'. This section helps parents to identify sources of stress and learn ways of coping together and supporting each other. ● Establish a timeframe for them to complete the second section. ● Remind them that you will check in to review the goals they set and learning from the second section. ● Encourage them in their efforts and their progress. ● Signpost to other relevant services if necessary. ● Summarise what you've covered together this session. ● Confirm date for third meeting. 	<p>Key messages from 'Understanding stress':</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stress can affect you, your relationship, and your children. 2. Stress happens when demands outweigh resources. 3. You may react differently to stress, depending on how you feel on the day. 4. Stress from daily hassles can be just as hard to cope with as stress from major events. 5. Stress can affect your thoughts, feelings, and actions. 6. Stress can come from inside or outside your relationship. 7. Stress from outside can spill over into your relationship. 8. Some ways of coping can make stress worse, not better.
30 mins	<p>Complete Section 2</p> <p>Parent</p>	<p>Parent completes the second section, 'Arguing better', in their own time.</p>	

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts	Additional notes
30 mins	<p>Session 3</p> <p>Practitioner and parent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check in with parent and remind them how much time you have together, eg 30 mins. Find out how they got on with the second section. ● Recap main points and learning from ‘Coping with stress together’. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you let your partner know when you are stressed? • How does your partner let you know when they are stressed? • What are some ways you can share the load? • How might you implement the five rules for talking about stress? • What are some ways you can offer emotional support before practical support? • Did you set a goal from the list, or did you set a different goal? ● Encourage discussion around any of the main themes that came up for the parent. ● Use your practitioner skills to tune in, listen, and support the parent. ● Introduce the third section, ‘Arguing better’. This section helps parents think about how arguments start, how they get out of hand, and how to resolve them. ● Flag that they will be asked to complete a post-course questionnaire. They will receive a completion certificate afterwards. ● Establish a timeframe for them to complete the third section. ● Remind the parent that you will check in to review the goals they set and learning from the third section. ● Encourage them in their efforts and their progress. ● Signpost to other relevant services if necessary. ● Summarise what you’ve covered together this session. ● Confirm date for fourth meeting. 	<p>Key messages from ‘Coping with Stress together’:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My stress or your stress is usually our stress. 2. There are lots of different ways to recognise stress. 3. Sometimes we can tell someone is stressed through their body language. 4. Give emotional support before practical support. 5. The five rules for talking about stress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick to the facts • Say how you feel • Really listen • Reflect back • Ask for support
30 mins	<p>Complete Section 3</p> <p>Parent</p>	<p>Parent completes the second section, ‘Coping with stress together’, in their own time.</p>	

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts	Additional notes
30 mins	<p>Session 4</p> <p>Practitioner and parent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check in with parent and remind them how much time you have together, eg 30 mins. ● Find out how they got on with the third section. ● Recap main points and learning from the third section, 'Arguing better'. ● What goals did the parent set and how did they get on? Did they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find ways to stay calm? • Listen to their partner without jumping in? • Try to see things from their partner's point of view? • Notice when they criticised or blamed their partner? • Take a break when they started to get angry? • Say positive things to their partner more regularly? ● Encourage discussion around any of the main themes that came up. ● Use your practitioner skills to tune in, listen, and support the parent. ● Affirm the new skills the parent has been learning and practising. ● Check they have filled out the final questionnaire. ● Now they have completed the course, reflect on the learner objectives and check for understanding. ● Ask if they would appreciate any further follow-up. A fifth session is recommended. ● Encourage them in their efforts and their progress. ● Signpost to other relevant services if necessary. ● Summarise what you've covered together this session. ● Confirm any future meetings to review progress. 	<p>Key messages from 'Arguing better':</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harmful arguments can be bad for your relationship. 2. Helpful arguments can be good for your relationship. 3. We all have logs and matches, but we also have ways to calm things down. 4. For every negative interaction, you need five positive ones to balance it out. 5. When things get tough, the first step is to STOP arguing.

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts
30 mins	<p>Session 5</p> <p>Practitioner and parent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check in with parent and remind them how much time you have together, eg 30 mins. ● The fifth session allows for a recap of the course, giving time to reflect on the main learnings from <i>How to Argue Better</i>, discuss achievements, consolidate skills, explore challenges, and look ahead. ● Questions for reflection include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What three things did you learn from the course? 2. What are you doing differently? 3. What do you notice has improved in your relationship with your partner? 4. What other areas would you like to work on for the future? ● Summarise what you've covered together this session. ● Confirm any next steps or agreed actions. Consider whether ongoing support may be needed and signpost if necessary. ● Thank the parent for engaging with the course, and offer any positive reflections you have, or anything you have learned in your time working with them. ● Let them know you (or someone from within your service) are available if they need support in the future, and give contact details. ● Wish them the best and make sure you have ended your professional relationship with them well.

At the end of your sessions



- Be aware of the emotions that may come up as you finish working with a parent, and be gentle in your approach as the ending takes place.
- Send a follow up email if appropriate.
- After sessions have finished you may want to ask parents for feedback of their experience of your sessions with them. This can form part of your internal data records and inform future interactions and processes.
- Where relevant, complete case notes and update records.
- Address any safeguarding issues if necessary.
- Where relevant, notify any partners or agencies involved.
- Engage in self-reflection or take aspects to supervision. What worked well? What have you learned? What would you do differently? Take time to think about your own feelings.
- You may need to notice your own patterns of behaviour, let off steam, or reflect on how your personal baggage may affect your responses. Seek support where needed.
- Get feedback and guidance.
- Use your reflections to develop your skills, ideas, and knowledge.

Sample session plan 2

Fully supported by practitioner

Sometimes practitioners will need to guide parents through How to Argue Better and tailor the experience to their needs. Full support may be required include when parents:

- Have language difficulties.
- Are from backgrounds where cultural difference is a factor.
- Have learning difficulties.
- Are faced with access barriers.
- Are experiencing illness or disability.
- Exhibit high risk factors.

Course title	How to Argue Better
Method of delivery	Practitioner offers full support to a parent, taking them through the course, step by step over a series of four sessions. This could be done virtually or in person.
Learners	Parents who are in a relationship with their child’s other parent. For targeted work, parents who are experiencing significant stress, have poor relational skills or are engaging in conflict that is frequent, hostile, intense and poorly resolved.
Learner objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To raise awareness of parental conflict and its impact on children. ● To increase parents’ capacity to cope with stress together. ● To support parents to develop skills to manage their conflict more constructively.
Session duration	This session plan is based on four one-to-one check-ins by a practitioner with a parent or couple. Session times will vary. The first one will be longer, to include registration and the first section of the course, and the final session could be a shorter review session. Plan for 4x 1hr sessions.
Equipment and material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Device for practitioner. ● Device for parent to create their own account (a computer, tablet, or smartphone). ● <i>How to Argue Better</i> flyer with QR code to access parent registration website (optional). ● <i>Getting on Better cards</i> (optional).
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be clear about your role in working with the parent. ● Where relevant, review referral information, check eligibility and background history, identify any risks involved and be aware of other services accessed, or other teams or partners that the parent may be working with. ● Consider the length of session you will need and adjust accordingly, based on other topics or activities you may be covering with the parent, eg other assessments, tools. ● To deliver <i>How to Argue Better</i> using a fully-supported approach, make sure you have completed all the required training and preparation tasks. Please refer to the Practitioner Guide for more information.

<p>Preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When fully supporting a parent or couple, it is likely you will need to adapt aspects of the course to suit their needs. Prior to your first meeting, check what extra support they may need, eg due to additional needs, language, accessibility, disability, and make plans for reasonable adjustments. For example, you may just watch the videos and discuss the graphics, rephrasing the content in a way that helps the parent to better connect with the material. ● Set up your own <i>Getting on Better</i> practitioner account and familiarise yourself with <i>How to Argue Better</i>. ● Make sure you have done some prior work with the parents to engage them and have their consent to proceed with working alongside them. Read the notes column from Session plan 1 (page 6) for ideas around initial engagement. ● Set up an initial meeting with the parent, with a view to organising four subsequent sessions. Ensure the location is quiet and free of distractions. ● Make sure the parent will have a device and access to Wi-Fi or mobile data. ● If connectivity is an issue, you may need to provide a hotspot or find a location to meet with free Wi-Fi, eg a family hub. ● If device access is an issue, you may want to lend them a device to use. Please ensure that they are logged into their own account, and are not using your practitioner login. ● Be prepared with any toolkits or conversation starters, such as relevant <i>Getting on better</i> cards. ● Depending on their circumstances, be aware of any support organisations you may need to signpost the parent to. ● Confirm parental consent for involvement and be ready to explain confidentiality and data sharing protocols. ● Be aware of your organisational policies and guidelines around confidentiality, safeguarding, domestic abuse, etc.
---------------------------	--

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts
60 mins	<p>Session 1</p> <p>Practitioner and parent</p> <p>Introduction and setup</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greet the parent, introduce yourself and check in on how they are. ● Remind them how much time you have together, eg 60 mins. ● They should know why they are seeing you, but you may want to remind them why the course would be helpful. You can acknowledge and normalise some of the challenges of being a parent and the stress that impacts relationships. You can go over the course objectives, or share an anonymised case study of how the course helped another client or service user. ● Introduce <i>How to Argue Better</i>. ● Offer them a suggested structure, an idea of the time commitment and how you will be involved. ● If they are still happy to proceed with the course, help them find the registration website. Either provide the URL or use a flyer with QR code. ● Help the parent create an individual accounts using their own device. ● Get them to log in and show them how the dashboard and digital interface works. ● Choose <i>How to Argue Better</i> and help them to complete the pre-course questionnaire. ● Watch the introductory video <i>Kids Talk</i>. Reflect on anything that stood out and what it brought up for them.
	Section 1 – Understanding stress	<p>Introduce the first section, 'Understanding stress'. This section raises parents awareness about the source of their stress and how it can affect their relationship.</p>
	The balance of stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read the content together and watch the video about demands and resources. ● Discuss the parent's current sources of stress and their coping resources. Reflect on the questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often do you feel stressed? A couple of times a week? Every day? What kinds of things can cause you stress? • Which ways of coping do you tend to rely on? What sort of things can you do and what support do you have that helps you to cope? • What happens when you feel overwhelmed by stress?
	How stress comes about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read the content together and watch the animation of the lady with the ringing phone. ● Talk about how stress can be exacerbated by how we are feeling and the way we respond to it. This helps parents reframe some of their initial thoughts about the source of their stress.

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts
	Major events and daily hassles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review the graphics and content. ● The comic strip shows how daily hassles can build up if they aren't addressed. ● Ask the parent if they have been able to identify what adds to their stress on a daily basis. What are the big life changes they have experienced? ● Emphasise how important it is to talk about the situation and to resolve it before it gets too big.
	How stress affects you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Go through the thoughts, feelings and behaviours content and discuss the graphics of how stress can impact us physically. ● Facilitate a conversation using the two images. Ask the parent to identify how stress affects them. What are their symptoms and how does that make them feel? What about their partner? ● Explain that stress can affect us physically and mentally. Anxiety, tension, irritability, and tiredness can all make us short-tempered, which is often why arguments erupt. ● Learning to recognise these signs can make it easier to deal with stress.
	Inside and outside stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look at the content and graphics about inside and outside stress. ● Assess the parent's understanding of how stress from outside their relationship – such as money or in-laws – can spill over into their relationship.
	Stress and relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look at the four main ways that outside stress can spill into your relationship and watch the video Darren's story. ● Stress spills over into the relationships in four main ways – time, communication, health, and behaviour. Help the parent identify the ways stress spills over into their relationship. ● Emphasise the main message from the video clip. <i>Darren's story</i> shows how easy it is to rely on alcohol or other unhealthy ways of coping with stress. Can the couple talk about their stress with each other?
	Where stress comes from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get the parent to complete the interactive task, thinking about what three things cause them the most stress. ● Ask the parent or couple if they have identified where their stress comes from. If they have both done a stress target, are they the same or different? What does this mean to them and what they might do about it?

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts
	<p>Key messages, section 1</p>	<p>Key messages from <i>'Understanding stress'</i>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stress can affect you, your relationship, and your children. 2. Stress happens when demands outweigh resources. 3. You may react differently to stress, depending on how you feel on the day. 4. Stress from daily hassles can be just as hard to cope with as stress from major events. 5. Stress can affect your thoughts, feelings, and actions. 6. Stress can come from inside or outside your relationship. 7. Stress from outside can spill over into your relationship. 8. Some ways of coping can make stress worse, not better. <p>Recap main points and learning from the first section, <i>'Understanding stress'</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What did you discover about stress and how it impacts you? ● What are your current demands and resources? ● What are your current sources of inside and outside stress? ● Are there any changes or learnings that you might implement?
	<p>Ending session 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get the parent or couple to complete the end of module questions. ● Tell them that they will notice improvements when they intentionally set a goal and practice the skills they are learning. ● Mention that you will be reviewing their progress with the goals they have set when you next meet. ● Affirm them in their intention to do the best for their relationship and for their children. ● Signpost to any other relevant service if necessary. ● Confirm date for second meeting.

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts
60 mins	Session 2 Practitioner and parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check in with parent and remind them how much time you have together, eg 60 mins. ● Find out how they got on with practising skills from the first section of <i>How to Argue Better</i>.
	Recap Section 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get the parent or couple to complete the end of module questions. ● Tell them that they will notice improvements when they intentionally set a goal and practice the skills they are learning. ● Mention that you will be reviewing their progress with the goals they have set when you next meet. ● Affirm them in their intention to do the best for their relationship and for their children. ● Signpost to any other relevant service if necessary. ● Confirm date for second meeting.
	Section 2 – Coping with stress together	Introduce the second section, ' <i>Coping with stress together</i> '. This section is about ways of coping and supporting each other. It also introduces the five rules for talking about stress.
	How 'my stress' becomes 'our stress'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Watch the video clip of the couple in the boat. ● Encourage parents to think of their stress as shared stress – something they deal with together rather than individually. This is an effective way of improving relationship quality and stability.
	Recognising stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read through the content about verbal and nonverbal ways of communicating stress. ● Get the parent to think of what some of these could be.
	Talking about stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get the parent to complete the activity about different ways they communicate stress. ● Partners will often use a variety of ways to let their partner know they are stressed – not all of them helpful. This activity should help the parent or couple identify their own stress behaviours and reflect on whether or not they are helpful in communicating stress to their partner.

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts
	<p>Five rules for talking about stress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Go through the content and watch the animation of the couple talking about stress. ● Recap on the learning from the clip and revisit the rules for communicating stress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick to the facts • Say how you feel • Really listen • Reflect back • Ask for support ● If you think the couple are having difficulty with this, there is an additional activity you can use to help develop the use of 'I' statements. <p>Additional activity – 'I' statements'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage parents to try using 'I' statements, focusing on their feelings rather than using 'you' statements that can come across as an accusation of blame. Using an 'I' statement helps a person become assertive without making any accusations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'I feel...' • 'When you...' • 'Because...' • 'What I need is...' ● It may feel strange for parents to approach their conversations in this way but with practice it can really help.
	<p>Supporting each other – practical support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Go through the content on emotional vs. practical support and watch the video of Jason offering practical support to Ada. ● Ask parents to reflect on the clip they have just seen. Did they see how Jason offered practical support straightaway? What effect did this have on Ada? They may notice that the problem being discussed is not likely to get resolved when it's addressed this way.
	<p>Supporting each other – emotional support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Watch the next clip where Jason offers emotional support. ● Go through some of the prompts, reflecting on the questions that are posed. ● Ask the parent if they were able to see the difference when Jason offered emotional support to Ada. Can they identify the steps Jason took to understand Ada's point of view? Talk about how Jason and Ada were able to sort things out together – a shared response. ● Find out if the parent or couple have had an opportunity to offer emotional as well as practical support. If they have found this difficult, there is an additional activity you can use to help them improve their listening skills.

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts
		<p>Additional activity – The funnel method</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If the couple needs some extra help in offering each other emotional support, this additional activity might help. ● Ask the parents to tell you about a recent time they felt stressed, focusing on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The problem – stating the facts. 2. Emotions and thoughts – both in the moment (angry, unsure of what to do) and the deeper feelings (ashamed, anxious, sad). 3. Personal theme – why did it bother me so much? ● This is the ‘funnel method’ of offering emotional support. You will be modelling relational skills – empathy, understanding, and acknowledging the other person’s feelings. eg <i>‘I can see why that might make you feel scared/angry/sad.’</i>
	Finding solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get parents to reflect on what they would like to do differently. This section allows them to think about goals they could set. They can choose their own goal, or you can suggest one based on their experiences so far. Some suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a note of daily hassles that are worrying me. • Ask for support when I’m stressed. • Look out for signs of stress in my partner. • Ask my partner questions to find out more. • Reassure my partner when they are upset. ● You can review their progress at the start of the next section.
	Key messages, section 2	<p>Key messages from <i>‘Coping with stress together’</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ‘My stress’ or ‘your stress’ is usually ‘our stress’. ● There are lots of different ways to recognise stress. ● Sometimes we can tell someone is stressed through their body language. ● Give emotional support before practical support. ● The five rules for talking about stress: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stick to the facts 2. Say how you feel 3. Really listen 4. Reflect back 5. Ask for support
	Ending Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get the parent to complete the end of module questions. ● Mention that you will review their progress with the goals they have set when you next meet. ● Encourage them in their efforts and their progress. ● Signpost to other relevant services if necessary. ● Summarise what you’ve covered together this session. ● Confirm a date for third meeting.

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts
60 mins	<p>Session 3</p> <p>Practitioner and parent</p> <p>Recap Section 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check in with parents and remind them how much time you have together, eg 60 mins. ● Find out how they got on with practising skills from the second section of <i>How to Argue Better</i>. ● Review their goals and progress. ● Encourage discussion around any of the main themes that came up for them. ● Use your practitioner skills to tune in, listen, and support the parent.
	Section 3 – Arguing better	<p>Introduce the third section, ‘<i>Arguing better</i>’. This section helps parents think about how their arguments start, and how they get out of hand. Most importantly, it will give them the skills to resolve arguments in more constructive ways.</p>
	Arguing better	<p>With the parent, read the through the descriptions of helpful and harmful conflict, reflecting on the image of the staircase.</p> <p>All couples argue but some conflict behaviours are more damaging than others. Encourage the parents to reflect on their own behaviour and how that might make each other feel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What harmful things do they say or do in an argument? • What do they each do in response? • How does that make them feel? <p>Ask them to think about the way they argue, and how it might make their children feel. For many parents, this can provide the motivation for behaviour change.</p>
	How conversations get out of hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Watch the animation of arguments using the metaphor of fire and consider the questions. ● Ask the parent to identify what they argue about and why, and to think about how little things can turn into big arguments. Understanding why arguments happen is the first step in stopping them from getting out of control.
	The magic ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look at the graphic about positive and negative moments between partners and discuss the magic ratio. ● The difference between happy and unhappy couples is the balance between positive and negative interactions in their relationship. The “magic ratio” is 5 to 1. ● For a relationship to remain stable and happy, it needs at least five positive interactions to balance out each negative reaction. ● Encourage the parent to think about the things they do in their couple relationship to make each other feel cared for. What are the positive things they say and do with one another?

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts
	Where you're at	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allow the parent to complete the sliding scale activity. ● The sliding scale tool is used both for assessment and solution-focused discussion. ● Explain that relationships can move up and down a scale. The umbrella symbolises the factors that help protect relationships during difficult times – humour, affection, time together, support, etc. ● Ask parents to share with you where they think they are on this scale. This will highlight how they see their level of conflict and if there are any discrepancies. ● Use solution-focused questions to help the couple come up with ideas about how they would like their relationship or communication to be different, and how they can build on their strengths. ● These questions can help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would it look like if things were better? • What would be happening? • What needs to change before you can get there? • What could you and your partner do differently? • How have you made up after falling out in the past? ● Offer positive affirmations on any progress so far. Behaviour change can be difficult for many parents. ● Reflect on the first step of how to argue better: STOP. It's not always possible to control our feelings or emotions in an argument. But we can control how we respond. ● Talk to the parent or couple about the strategies they could use to help them stay calm.
	A harmful argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With the parent, read through the material and watch the video clip of how a conversation gets out of hand and becomes a harmful argument. ● Allow the parent to observe the harmful behaviours they observed. ● Did they spot how destructive (harmful) conflict behaviours caused the argument to escalate? Jason and Ada were critical, defensive, blaming each other, and trying to win the argument.
	Reflections on a harmful argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Watch the two videos of Jason and Ada's reflections following a harmful argument. ● Review the three important skills that can help to make an argument more constructive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay calm • Listen • See things differently

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts
	Finding solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get parents to reflect on what they would like to do differently. This section allows them to think about goals they could set. They can choose their own goal, or you can suggest one based on their experiences so far. Some suggestions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay calm – take a deep breath before I respond. • Listen to my partner without jumping in. • Try to see it from my partner’s point of view. • Notice when I blame or criticise. • Take a break if I start getting angry. • Say two positive things to my partner every week. ● Encourage them to start small and to keep practising.
	A few questions to finish	<p>Help the parent to complete the post-course questions at the end of Section 3. Completion of the survey is important in order to get accurate data back to your team.</p>
	Key messages, section 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key messages from <i>‘Arguing better’</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmful arguments can be bad for your relationship. • Helpful arguments can be good for your relationships • We all have logs and matches, but we also have ways to calm things down. • For every negative moment between you and your partner, you need five positive moments to balance it out. • When things get tough, the first step is to STOP arguing.
	Ending Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once the parent has submitted the final questionnaire, they will receive a completion certificate. ● Mention that you will review their progress with the goals they have set when you next meet. ● Encourage them in their efforts and their progress. ● Signpost to any other relevant service if necessary. ● Summarise what you’ve covered together this session. ● Confirm a date for the fourth and final meeting.

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts
60 mins	<p>Session 4</p> <p>Practitioner and parent</p> <p>Recap Section 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check in with parent and remind them how much time you have together, eg 60 mins. ● This is the final session to recap the course, reflect on the main learnings from <i>How to Argue Better</i>, discuss achievements, consolidate skills, explore challenges, and look ahead. ● Find out how they got on with practising skills from the third section of <i>How to Argue Better</i>. ● Review their goals and progress. ● Encourage discussion around any of the main themes that came up for them. ● Use your practitioner skills to tune in, listen, and support the parent.
	Reflections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further questions for reflection include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What three things did you learn from the course? • What are you doing differently? • What do you notice has improved in your relationship with your partner? • What other areas would you like to work on for the future? ● Summarise what you've covered together this session.
	Review and ending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confirm next steps or agreed actions. Consider whether ongoing support may be needed and signpost if necessary. ● Thank the parent for their engagement with the course, any positive reflections you have, and anything you have learned in your time working with them. ● Let them know you (or someone from within your service) are available if they need support or want to get in contact again in the future, and give any contact details. ● Wish them the best and make sure you have ended your professional relationship with them well.

<p>At the end of your sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be aware of the emotions that may come up as you finish working with a parent, and be gentle in your approach as the ending takes place. ● Send a follow-up email if appropriate. ● After sessions have finished you may want to ask for feedback of the parents' experience of your sessions with them. This information may form part of your internal data records and inform future interactions and processes. ● Where relevant, complete case notes and update records. ● Address any safeguarding issues if necessary. ● Where relevant, notify any partners or agencies involved. ● Engage in self-reflection or take aspects to supervision. What worked well? What have you learned? What would you do differently? Take time to think about your own feelings. ● You may need to notice your own patterns of behaviour, let off steam or reflect on how your personal baggage may affect your responses. Receive support where needed. ● Get feedback and guidance. ● Use your reflections to develop your skills, ideas and knowledge.
---	---

Sample session plan 3

Group sessions

Below you will find a basic session plan for face-to-face delivery of a *How to Argue Better* parent workshop run over four sessions. This session plan can be adapted for online delivery over the same number of sessions. Please use ideas and reflection questions from Session plan 2 (page 13) for expanded content and discussion prompts.

Course title	How to Argue Better	
Method of delivery	Parent workshops, delivered to parents by a trainer or facilitator, face-to-face or online.	
Learners	Parents who are in a relationship with their child’s other parent. For targeted work, parents who are experiencing significant stress, have poor relational skills, or are engaging in conflict that is frequent, hostile, intense, and poorly resolved.	
Learner objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To raise awareness of parental conflict and its impact on children. ● To increase parents’ capacity to cope with stress together. ● To support parents to develop skills to manage their conflict more constructively. 	
Session duration	This session plan is based on four parent workshops of 90 mins each for face-to-face sessions, or 60 mins online. Total time is 4 to 6 hours.	
Equipment and material for parent sessions	<p>Face-to-face sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Laptop and charger for facilitator – logged into practitioner’s parent account. ● Projector or large screen for presentation, with HDMI cable. ● Printouts of this lesson plan or your version of an agenda. ● Register of attendees. ● Parents bring their own device for each person to create separate account (eg their phone or tablet) ● Table – to display any materials. <p>Optional items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>How to Argue Better</i> flyer with QR code to access parent registration website. ● <i>Getting on Better</i> cards. ● Flipchart, markers, name labels. ● Snacks or refreshments. 	<p>Online sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Laptop and charger for facilitator – logged into practitioner’s parent account. ● Platform for video calls – Zoom or Teams. ● Printouts of this lesson plan or your version of an agenda. ● Register of attendees. ● <i>How to Argue Better</i> parent registration URL to share with participants. ● Parents have a device available for creating their own account.

Course title	How to Argue Better
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make sure the course has been well promoted. See section on promoting <i>How to Argue Better</i> (page 36). ● Have administration systems in place to receive course bookings and send out welcome information. ● Ensure that a training plan has been formulated. You will need to dedicate time to review the materials, and expand this session plan to include timings, discussion points, and activities tailored to your group. ● For online sessions, be aware of how and when you might make the use breakout rooms. ● Where relevant, be aware of registrants’ referral information, check eligibility and background history, identify any risks involved and be aware of other services accessed, or other teams or partners that the couples may be working with. ● Adjust session length for any additional refreshment breaks or activities. ● To deliver the <i>How to Argue Better</i> digital intervention through parent workshops, read previous section, make sure you have completed all the required training and preparation tasks set out. Please refer to the Practitioner Guide for more information. ● Prior to running parent workshops, you may need to adapt certain aspects of the course to suit their needs. Prior to your first meeting, check what extra support anyone may need, eg due to additional needs, language, accessibility, disability. Make plans for reasonable adjustments as necessary. ● Set up your own <i>Getting on Better</i> practitioner and parent account and familiarise yourself with <i>How to Argue Better</i>. ● Make sure the parents have a device and access to Wi-Fi or mobile data. ● Depending on their circumstances, be aware of any support organisations you may need to signpost the parent to. ● Be ready to explain confidentiality and data sharing protocols. ● Be aware of your organisational policies and guidelines with regards to confidentiality, safeguarding, domestic abuse and other relevant areas.
Venue (F2F)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For face-to-face group sessions, choose a venue that has enough space to accommodate parents or couples, plus additional equipment. ● Access to a restroom facility (ideally on the same floor) will be important.

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts for F2F	Notes
30 mins before session starts	Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrival, setup. ● Refreshments for delegates. 	IT support for laptop and projector setup, check room layout
10 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome. ● Inform learners of toilet location, planned break times and refreshments, fire safety, and emergency procedures. ● Mention learner wellbeing and wellbeing breaks due to course content. 	
30 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning objectives. ● Agenda. ● Group working agreement. ● Introductions and hopes. 	
5 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce <i>How to Argue Better</i>. ● Parents create login for intervention and complete the first pre-course questionnaire. 	Parents use their own device to register
40 mins		<p>Section 1: Understanding stress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take group through the first section of the course. ● Stop at various points to encourage discussion in partners or groups. 	Use Session plan 2 for ideas on reflection questions.
10 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get parents to set some goals that they would be willing to practice between now and the next session. ● Allow time for group to reflect on key learnings from the session. 	
5 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summary of first session. ● Take any questions. ● Reminders ahead of the next session. ● Close 	

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts for F2F	Notes
30 mins before session starts	Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrival, setup. ● Refreshments for delegates. 	IT support for laptop and projector setup, check room layout
15 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome. ● Housekeeping: toilets, timings, safety and wellbeing. ● Reminder of learning objectives, agenda and working agreement. ● Introductions or settling exercise 	
20 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group reflections from Section 1: <i>Understanding stress</i>. ● Get individuals to log into the intervention using their own devices and complete the end of module questions for Section 1. ● Summary of key points from last session. 	If appropriate, some parents may wish to share how they got on with their goals.
40 mins		<p>Section 2: Coping with stress together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take the group through the second section of the course. ● Stop at various points to encourage discussion with partner, or engage in group discussion. 	Use Session plan 2 for ideas on reflection questions.
10 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get parents to set some goals they would be willing to practice between now and the next session. ● Allow time for group to reflect on key learnings from the session. 	
5 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summary of second session. ● Take any questions. ● Reminders ahead of the next session. ● Close. 	

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts for F2F	Notes
30 mins before session starts	Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrival, setup. ● Refreshments for delegates. 	IT support for laptop and projector setup, check room layout
15 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome. ● Housekeeping: toilets, timings, safety and wellbeing. ● Reminder of learning objectives, agenda and working agreement. ● Introductions or settling exercise 	
15 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group reflections from Section 2: <i>Coping with stress together</i>. ● Get individuals to log into the intervention using their own devices and complete the end of module questions for Section 2. ● Summary of key points from last session. 	If appropriate, some parents may wish to share how they got on with their goals.
45 mins		<p>Section 3: Arguing better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take the group through the third section of the course. ● Stop at various points to encourage discussion in partners or engage in group discussion. 	Use Session plan 2 for ideas on reflection questions.
10 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get parents to set some goals they would be willing to practice between now and the next session. ● Allow time for group to reflect on key learnings from the session. 	
5 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summary of third session. ● Take any questions. ● Reminders ahead of the next session. ● Close. 	

Time	Session details	Practitioner prompts for F2F	Notes
30 mins before session starts	Session 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrival, setup. ● Refreshments for delegates. 	IT support for laptop and projector setup, check room layout
15 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome. ● Housekeeping: toilets, timings, safety and wellbeing. ● Reminder of learning objectives, agenda and working agreement. ● Introductions or settling exercise 	
20 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group reflections from Section 3: <i>Arguing better</i>. ● Get individuals to log into the intervention using their own devices and complete the end of module questions for Section 3. ● Summary of key points from last session. 	
30 mins		<p>Course reflections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is the final session to recap the course, to reflect on the main learnings from <i>How to Argue Better</i>, discuss achievements, consolidate skills, explore remaining challenges and to look ahead. ● Get parents to reflect, individually, or in couples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What three things did you learn from the course? • What are you doing differently? • What do you notice has improved in your relationship with your partner? • What other areas would you like to work on for the future? 	
20 mins		<p>Review and ending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allow time to reflect on key learnings from the four sessions. ● Take any questions. ● Get individuals to complete the final post-course questionnaire. ● Share any additional resources. ● Signpost to any relevant organisations or agencies. 	A selection of <i>Getting on Better</i> cards could be used to prompt discussion.
5 mins		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thank the group for their engagement with the course, any positive reflections you have, and anything you have learned in your time working with them as a group. ● Offer contact details for further support. ● Close. 	

<p>At the end of your sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Well done on delivering this course! It takes a lot of energy and resource, so remember to look after yourself and be kind in your immediate personal reflections.● File any required records of attendance.● Send any final emails with links to additional resources.● After sessions have finished you may want to ask for feedback of the parents' experience of your sessions with them. This information may form part of your internal data records and inform future parents workshops.● Where relevant, take any follow-up actions as needed.● Debrief the sessions with your co-facilitator or manager. Cover programme aspects such as promotion, communication, environment, welcome, activities, group contribution, dynamics, couple interactions, questions, resources and timings.● Engage in self-reflection or take aspects to supervision. What worked well? What have you learned? What would you do differently? Take time to think about your own feelings.● You may need to notice your own patterns of behaviour, let off steam or reflect on how your personal baggage may affect your responses. Seek support where needed.● Get feedback and guidance.● Use your reflections to develop your skills, ideas, and knowledge.
---	--

Skills for practitioners and facilitators

Important skills for effective interactions

Whether running specific sessions or working without an agenda, practitioners can use key skills to build confidence in working with individuals, couples, or parents.

- Showing empathy and kindness, holding the other person in a positive regard, and being open to understanding their lived experience.
- Keeping the other person's mind in mind by looking for clues that explain their behaviour and responses.
- Being curious and open to exploring, resisting the temptation to offer solutions.
- Tapping into your own feelings, being aware of your emotions and how they affect your thinking and behaviour.
- Regulating your own response, and being mindful of what's going on for you, including your physical responses.
- Checking your own beliefs and assumptions, and refraining from making judgements.
- Being flexible and adapting your approach, tailoring your communication to the needs and circumstances of the situation.
- Identifying a shared purpose to help support the person in a way that works for them and for you.
- Listening, focusing, and tuning in to show that the other person has your full attentions.
- Recognising and repairing ruptures by acknowledging the loss of connection, resetting a conversation, and trying again.
- Managing time and boundaries, ensuring there are clear guidelines.

As you use these skills and your confidence increases, you will be better able to build trust and create a supportive environment that helps parents to address sensitive issues. As well as improving your own practice, your confidence will help parents to develop healthier communication, build stronger connections with each other and their children, and contribute to positive outcomes for families and communities.

Skills for group facilitators

Practitioners delivering parent workshops or group sessions will need additional facilitation skills to design and deliver sessions, and to manage group dynamics. Some of these skills include:

- **Planning and preparation:** Designing structured sessions with clear aims and preparing appropriate materials to meet the needs of couples and parents.
- **Understanding group dynamics:** Recognising how individuals interact in the group and responding effectively to engagement, conflict, or power dynamics.
- **Creating a safe and inclusive environment:** Establishing trust, ground rules, and respect so participants feel comfortable sharing and learning.

- **Encouraging participation and collaboration:** Actively involving all group members and promoting shared learning through discussion and group activities.
- **Engaging different learning styles:** Using a mix of visual, verbal, and practical approaches to support diverse ways of learning.
- **Facilitation and active listening skills:** Guiding discussion rather than instructing, while listening attentively and validating participants' experiences.
- **Flexibility and managing challenges:** Adapting sessions in response to group needs and handling difficult situations calmly and constructively.
- **Strengths-based and reflective approach:** Building on what parents already do well and encouraging reflection on learning and real-life application.
- **Evaluation and feedback:** Collecting and using feedback to assess impact and improve future sessions.
- **Professional practice and development:** Maintaining boundaries, recording outcomes, and engaging in ongoing learning and reflective practice.

Key messages for parents

- Being parents can bring many joys, but the challenges of everyday life with children can put strain on your relationship. Being able to **navigate the challenges together in a way that strengthens your relationship, helps in your parenting** and also creates a home environment that fosters positive outcomes for your child.
- **Arguments are normal, but how you handle them matters.** Understand how disagreements start and develop strategies to stop them before they escalate.
- **Conflict affects children's wellbeing.** Reducing parental conflict benefits the whole family.
- **Understand the difference between constructive and destructive conflict.** This helps you to spot unhealthy patterns and take steps to build healthy ways of relating. Troubled relationships are often characterised by poor communication, blame, criticism, contempt, defensiveness and the 'silent treatment'.
- **Where possible, stress should be shared.** By supporting each other, you can avoid one person carrying the burden alone. When stress is seen as a shared issue, both partners matter, both are affected by the situation, and both can offer solutions.
- Dyadic coping is not about one partner controlling the other. It is about you both sharing stress and working together. This is a **protective factor that will help you to create a virtuous cycle of support** which is vital to a happy relationship.
- You can both find **joint strategies to manage stress**, rather than relying on unhealthy coping methods, like drinking alcohol or other risky behaviours.
- **Communication is crucial.** Learn how to talk about difficult topics calmly and constructively. This could include finances, roles, childcare, sex, work, and levels of coping.
- **Listening skills matter.** Take time to understand each other's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.
- **Adaptability is key.** Be flexible in creating shared family routines and expectations.
- **Resolving issues constructively takes intention and care.** Raise concerns gently, acknowledge the other person's perspective, and work things out together by finding acceptable compromises.
- **Focus on the protective factors in your relationship.** Affection, intimacy, humour, seeing the best in each other, balancing time together with time apart, and resolving conflict well will help to strengthen your relationship.
- **Your relationship is important to your child.** The parental relationship is at the heart of family functioning and fosters positive outcomes for your child.
- **Relationships change over time.** Accept that these changes are normal and learn to navigate the stages by maintaining connection and empathy.

Promoting the sessions

We're delighted to be working with you to support parents, and we want to help you to share our interventions as widely as possible in your local communities.

We provide course flyers and social media assets to help get you started. We are very happy for you to create your own materials to promote the package – we just ask you to follow the guidelines below. If you would like to discuss promoting the package locally, please contact our communications team at communications@oneplusone.org.uk.

Promotional materials

You will find these in the 'Promotional materials' section of the [Getting on Better Practitioner Guide](#).

In this section you will find a selection of resources to help you promote the *Getting on Better* package, including:

- **Printable flyers.** Flyers promoting *How to Argue Better*, and the *Getting on Better* package as a whole. You can display these in public places, or share them with parents. They explain the benefits of the courses and how to access them.
- **Social media assets.** A selection of images and suggested wording to help you promote the parent courses on your social media channels.
- **Video clips.** A collection of video clips which you can use as promotional tools, or to help you engage parents with the resources. Some of these are standalone clips raising awareness of the impact of parental conflict on children, and some are extracts from the parent courses offering tips for parents to try.

Guidelines for use of promotional materials.

1. Please do not edit our resources

Each resource is evidence based and should be viewed in the context of its original setting. For this reason, we ask you not to take your own clips or screenshots from the course content or reproduce extracts to add into other material.

2. The resources are for use only by residents of your local authority

In any communications work you do, please make it clear that the resources are available to residents of your local authority area only. It's important that practitioners and parents register their local authority area when they create their accounts to use the interventions. This helps us to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the evaluation reports we share with you.

3. Please ensure you credit OnePlusOne and use our logo

If you are producing materials to promote the interventions or resources in this package, please make sure you include OnePlusOne's logo. We've produced a simple guide for how to use our logo in different settings. [Access the guide to using our logo \(PDF 283.4kb\)](#). You can also [download different versions of our partnership logo](#).

4. Let us know when you've used our content

If you have used any of these materials, or conducted your own communications work to promote our resources, please let us know by emailing communications@oneplusone.org.uk. This is useful for the evaluation reports we create for you. We're also keen to share examples of good practice with others, so we may contact you to ask if you would be willing to have your approaches featured in a case study.

5. Please tag OnePlusOne in your social media posts.

Instagram: www.instagram.com/oneplusone_charity

Facebook: www.facebook.com/oneplusoneuk

Threads: www.threads.com/@oneplusone_charity

BlueSky: bsky.app/profile/oneplusoneuk.bsky.social

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/oneplusone

If you have any questions about these materials, or if you would like to discuss any aspects of promoting this package, please email info@oneplusone.org.uk.

Additional resources

Getting on Better cards

The full set of *Getting on Better* cards is included in your Practitioner Guide to share with parents and children. You'll find lots of cards that are helpful for parents experiencing stress and conflict, but you might want to start with *Balance of stress*.

GETTING ON BETTER (2026)
Balance of stress

→ Everyone has 'demands' and 'resources' in their life.

DEMANDS are things that require your time, energy, and attention. They might be big things like having a baby, or regular events like paying the bills. Even things like helping your child with homework or looking after your partner can be thought of as 'demands'.

RESOURCES are coping mechanisms you use to deal with demands. They might be practical things like money or a car, or emotional things like the support of your partner or family, talking to a friend, or playing with your kids.

→ So how do we keep our demands and resources balanced?

Balance of stress

→ **Keeping the scales balanced**

Think of your capacity like a scale. When you've got plenty of **resources**, the scale remains balanced – you're more likely to cope with new **demands** that come your way.

Stress usually happens when you feel there is an imbalance between demands and resources. As demands pile up, it can feel like you don't have enough resources to cope. You may get overwhelmed, irritated, or anxious.

Some coping mechanisms may also end up becoming unhealthy demands, like drinking alcohol or spending too much money.

That's why it's important to use **healthy coping mechanisms**:

- Reframe demands in a positive way: "I'm lucky to have a family to take care of."
- Practise acceptance: "I can't change this demand, but it doesn't dictate my happiness."

Sometimes just asking for support can lighten the load. Family and friends can help with practical things or hold you accountable to changes you want to make.

Remember – when we share our demands, we can help create resources for each other and rebalance the scales.

See it differently

See it differently is a collection of videos and animations that helps parents find alternative ways of handling disagreements. Jag's family shows a family who are worried about money, and Mahmoud's family is an example of how silence can be harmful.

www.seeitdifferently.org/

OnePlusOne website

News, resources, and training from OnePlusOne. Everyone should have the knowledge and skills to form, maintain, and strengthen relationships with the people in their lives. We empower people to do this through evidence-based training and digital resources.

www.oneplusone.org.uk/

Sources and further reading

- Acquah, D., Sellars, R. and Harold, G. (2017). Inter-parental conflict and outcomes for children in the contexts of poverty and economic pressure. London: Early Intervention Foundation.
- Bandura, A. and Walters, R. H. (1977). Social learning theory (vol. 1). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-hall.
- Bodenmann, G., Falconier, M.K. and Randall A.K. (2019) Editorial: Dyadic coping. *Frontiers in Psychology* [online]. 10, pp. 1498. Available from: doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.0149
- Bodenmann, G. and Shantinath, S.D. (2004). The Couples Coping Enhancement Training (CCET): A new approach to prevention of marital distress based upon stress and coping. *Family Relations*. 53(5), pp. 477-484.
- Coleman, L. and Glenn, F. (2009). When couples part: Understanding the consequences of relationship breakdown for adults and children. London: OnePlusOne.
- Coleman, L., Houlston, C. and Casey, P. (2013). Establishing the evidence-base of 'what works' in managing conflict within intact relationships and establishing a promising approach to the UK context. London: Department for Education/OnePlusOne.
- Gottman, J. (1994) What predicts divorce? The relationship between marital processes and marital outcomes. Hove: Psychology Press.
- Harold, G., Acquah, D., Sellers, R. and Chowdry, H. (2016). What works to enhance interparental relationships and improve outcomes for children. London: Early Intervention Foundation.
- Michie, S., Yardley, L., West, R., Patrick, K. and Greaves, F. (2017) Developing and evaluating digital interventions to promote behaviour change in health and health care: Recommendations resulting from an international workshop. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 19(6): e232. doi: 10.2196/jmir.7126
- Miller, W. and Rollick, S. (2012). Motivational interviewing: Helping people change. 3rd ed. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Randall, K. and Bodenmann, G. (2009) The role of stress on close relationships and marital satisfaction. *Clinical Psychology Review*. 29(2), pp. 105-115.
- Reynolds, J., Houlston, C., Coleman, L. and Harold, G. (2014) Parent conflict: Outcomes and interventions for children and families. London: Policy Press.
- Rohrbaugh, M.J., Shoham, V., Skoyen, J.A., Jensen, M. and Mehl, M.R. (2012). We-talk, communal coping, and cessation success in a couple-focused intervention for health-compromised smokers. *Family Processes*. 51(1), pp.107-121. Available from: doi:10.1111/j.1545-5300.2012.01388.x
- Taylor, P., Russ-Eft, D. and Chan, D. (2006), A meta-analytical review of Behaviour Modelling Training. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 90(4), pp. 692-709. Available from: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/A-meta-analytic-review-of-behavior-modeling-Taylor-Russ-Eft/>



OnePlusOne
c/o MHA MacIntyre Hudson
6th Floor
2 London Wall Place
London
EC2Y 5AU

 info@oneplusone.org.uk

All content copyright OnePlusOne © 2026