

IMPACT REPORT



M A K I N G P E A C E S I N C E 2 0 0 6



WHAT WE DO

The Centre for Peaceful Solutions (CPS) is a registered charity with a track record in using The Dialogue Road Map (DRM) to reduce violence.

CPS establishes projects that change attitudes to conflict and help to resolve disputes peacefully within families, communities and organisations.

All the work we undertake is based on the DRM. The DRM is a tool for getting past resistance, hostility, anger and aggression by transforming violence into co-operation. It is the result of extensive research and practice by Maria Arpa at the CPS and based on Dr. Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication (NVC), Carl Roger's Person Centred Approach and needs-based theory.

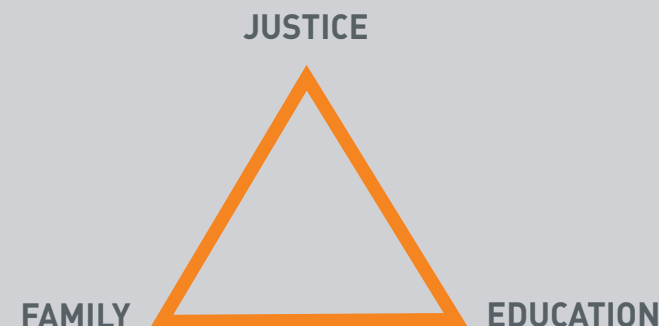
We focus on introducing the DRM to people living and working in marginalised, 'hard to reach' deprived communities. That translates into working with gang members, (ex) offenders and their families, vulnerable individuals, children and families as well as people from different faiths/ethnic backgrounds, ensuring we develop strong partnerships with local groups.

The DRM training breaks down the components of a dialogue and teaches the theory and skills behind each component. The intention is for all parties to the dialogue to be heard and understood in order to find change through choice. It can be used in many situations from violent crime retaliations to family disagreements, from workplace challenges to neighbour disputes.

"The Centre for Peaceful Solutions worked to encourage people to dialogue out of conflict rather than stab or shoot each other."

**Bethan West, United Nations Representative
& Community Safety Consultant**

OUR AREAS OF WORK



"By working and influencing these areas CPS and the DRM impacts quality of life, health and well-being and social capital as we currently experience it in the UK. When adopted across these areas it will be the most impactful crime reduction we have seen in the last 20 years."

Bethan West, United Nations Representative & Community Safety Consultant

When responding to aggression directed at them,
course participants surveyed said:



BEFORE OUR TRAINING



AFTER OUR TRAINING

THE COST OF VIOLENCE

Violent crime costs the UK economy more than £124 billion a year, equivalent to £4,700 for every household.

This figure which equates to 7.7 percent of the UK's GDP, includes the cost of police investigations, courts and prison expenditure as well as a vast amount in lost productivity. ¹

“If I'd known this six months ago,
I wouldn't have murdered my wife.”

Keith, DRM Prisoner Training

It costs around £36,000 ² per year to keep someone in prison in England and Wales. Since 1993 the prison population has risen by 92% to 85,134. ³

45.5% of adults are reconvicted within one year of release. For those serving sentences of less than 12 months this increases to 60% ⁴

“Before the training, every time my button was
pushed I had to respond. What I am finding since
doing the training is I have dialogue as
opposed to a verbal war.”

JP, Brent Mediation Project

We know the use of the DRM reduces public spending and re-offending, and prevents violent crime as people learn to dialogue out of conflict. The impact of our work can be seen in the cases highlighted in this document.

1. UK Peace Index Report 2013, institute for Economics and Peace

2. National Offender Management Service Annual Report and Accounts 2014 - 2015

3. The Story of Prison Population 1993 - 2016 England and Wales, Ministry of Justice

4. Tables C1a and C2a, Ministry of Justice Proven reoffending statistics quarterly 2013 - 2014

TIME TO MAKE A CHANGE



“If we want people to take responsibility, we need to
give them a method of doing so that is easy to learn
and feels better than what they are doing now.”

Maria Arpa

We want to transform the criminal justice system by using the Dialogue Road Map to resolve violent crime, abuse and interpersonal disputes in communities, families, prisons and schools.

We want to transform our public services using the Dialogue Road Map to create better quality engagement between front line workers and service users with complex needs.

- Developing tools to engage peacefully even in the face of hostility, anger and resistance.
- Supporting people to find their voice and feel empowered to express themselves effectively.
- Choosing authentic dialogue instead of adversarial positions and highlighting the difference.
- Managing the anger, fear and frustration caused by trauma and violence.
- Building trust by connecting in a way where everyone's needs are heard and understood.
- Creating the conditions required for learning or communicating further.
- Developing empathy and listening skills in order to see another's perspective as well as one's own.
- Allowing change through choice to create outcomes that everyone involved feels ownership of.
- Integrating self-discipline, self-responsibility and accountability into day-to-day living.

PARWAIZ

MY STORY

I am male, aged 22 and I live in London. I met Maria and the team as part of a school programme in Brent. I attended a local comprehensive school which had all the issues that you would expect from an inner city school such as bullying and violence. After the programme, I kept in touch with CPS as I enjoyed the project and often attended their office and trainings. Now I have become a trustee for CPS to ensure the voice of young people is heard and has an influence on the implementation of the work of CPS.



MY JOURNEY

I was involved in a lot of personal confrontation and did not know how to deal with it. This usually led to disagreements, arguments and sometimes even resulted in violence. The CPS training let me see that there were other ways of resolving the problem and it only took the right words to get the right answers and to resolve an issue without getting angry or confrontational.

MY REFLECTIONS

The Dialogue Road Map has helped me avoid violent confrontations, as well as helping me solve problems in my relationship with my girlfriend. I am more open minded about the problem and see that there are many outcomes. We are able to sit and talk about small problems, in fact, it helped our relationship blossom when we were more open about our feelings and didn't feel the need to avoid talking about it.

JOHN



MY STORY

My name is John. I have spent 20 years in prison and I am a lifer. I grew up in the troubles in Northern Ireland. My father died when I was 8 and my mother took to alcohol so I had little support and guidance growing up in a troubled community. I was, what would be described now as, 'at risk'. At 15 I was sexually assaulted by a man. I immediately made my way to the police station covered in blood but they turned me away because I was a Catholic. When they slammed the gate in my face shouting racial abuse at me, it was a significant turning point that shaped my world view.

MY JOURNEY

During my time in prison, I have witnessed great human suffering, every kind of mental health problem and lots of violence. I continued to have a negative view of the world. As part of my sentence plan, I have been on many courses and none of them reached me. Then 3 years ago, Maria and David came to the prison to deliver their mediation training to 12 prisoners. It was obvious that this wasn't just a job to them and that they saw us as human being without labels. Those 6 days changed my life. Suddenly, I had an easy to follow, logical process that I could use to help others. I came to understand the choices in front of me and how to access them within myself. I came to understand the choices in front of me and how to access them within myself. Just when I thought I had buried any feelings, this course touched me.

MY REFLECTIONS

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MY STORY

From being a young boy I always wanted to be a police officer. My Dad was a police officer and so were his mates. They would meet at our house, I listened to them talk about their work, they were friends and the camaraderie between them was fun to be around. To me as a young boy it sounded exciting and they seemed brave helping people who needed them when they were in trouble. My Dad was my hero and I wanted to be just like him. My Dad was an officer in Wiltshire but I wanted to join the Met – “the premier police force in the world”.

MY JOURNEY

In 2001 I joined the Met. I was elated. I attended Hendon Police training school for my National Police Training; seventeen weeks with other recruits learning about all aspects of policing including support to victims and witnesses, the arrest, detaining or reporting of criminals, searching people, premises and vehicles, interviewing suspects and witnesses, undertaking investigations and managing disputes and conflict in a police context.

After ten weeks we received our postings. I was posted to Brent or QK, as it's known in the Met. I didn't know much about the Borough but once I was posted, I worked out of Harlesden Police Station.

Harlesden was known for its vibrant Caribbean culture and unofficially named London's reggae capital. The population included people of Afro-Caribbean heritage, as well as Irish, Catholic Brazilian and smaller Portugese and Colombian communities. I had never worked in a multi-cultural area before and had never really thought what it would be like.

Police reports stated that in 1999, Harlesden and the nearby Stonebridge estate, witnessed a high number of murders and became a crime hotspot. By 2005 the area had the highest murder rate in Britain. There were 26 shooting incidents that year alone.



In Harlesden, we were in the thick of these gang disputes as we patrolled. I won't lie, it was hard. The area felt hostile and most engagement with the community was challenging.

It was difficult to know what to do for the best. People were scared of the level of violence, young people were being murdered, drug dealing was evident and as quick as we arrested dealers, new dealers arrived within 24 hours – often sooner. Every day police officers were verbally abused and it was a difficult environment to work in. Our borough identifier, QK, started to be known as the identifier “Quick Kill” because of the number of murders happening. It was a scary place to work and I often found myself wondering if this work was for me. I met Maria through a project called Not Another Drop (NAD). I was one of the first police officers to attend a course to learn about Nonviolent Communication. Many of my colleagues were cynical and so was I to start with. How was teaching me to talk in a different way going to help me when I was out dealing with the community?

I attended Maria's course – I had been told by my managements to add a skill to my “toolkit”. The course content was interesting and I listened and applied what I was being taught. Still I wasn't completely convinced.

I took my new skills to the street and very quickly I realised their value. By just using my different language and shifting my perspective slightly, I was able to engage in a more effective way. I was amazed. My colleagues were very positive. It led to all probationers from Hendon being trained in Nonviolent Communication before they came to the Borough. Through ongoing prevention work and police investigation, crime rates in Harlesden were significantly reduced in the late 2000s.

MY REFLECTIONS

Like many police officers I was skeptical about something new and different but I became a complete convert. I use the skills I learnt on a daily basis in my work and personal life. The course changed my life. At times when I went out in Harlesden I was fearful for my life. The training gave me the confidence and skills to engage with people on a human level which made my work easier and more rewarding. Every police officer in the country should be taught these skills.



MY STORY

I completed my education and became a HM Customs & Excise officer investigating international drugs trafficking, money laundering and human trafficking. In 1998 I was the first woman to be posted overseas as a Drugs Liaison Officer to Cyprus working in the Near Middle East, a longstanding area of violent conflict.

I worked with Interpol, Europol and various overseas governments on serious organized crime. I also worked with The United Nations on crime prevention projects and mutual development programmes to reduce violence and drug trafficking and abuse.

On my return from overseas I sought a new direction believing prevention is better than enforcement. I went to work in Brent and created an anti-gun and anti-knife crime project, Not Another Drop.

MY JOURNEY

From 2002 I led a Government funded initiative, Not Another Drop (NAD), based in Brent in response to a number of shootings in this London Borough.

NAD was born out of a unique collaboration between the Council, The Metropolitan Police Service and the local community. Over the years the partnership has grown to include more partners, however the cornerstone of NAD is the community.

Since 2002 NAD worked across all sectors of the community to reduce the incidence of violent crime, particularly gun, knife and gang-related violence, and saw a steady decrease in the number of gun and knife enabled crime whilst the programme was ongoing.

In the programmes I have worked on for the United Nations communication and mediation are core elements. I have replicated the use of these in all of the



programmes I have created. I have worked with Mediation Northern Ireland and several other national and international mediation services.

NAD in Brent was no exception, Maria and I worked together on a mediation model working with families and individuals affected by violence. The project was funded by Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) where money seized from criminals is re-invested in programmes to prevent crime, and separated by the Treasury. The vision was to train a critical mass of people in the community and in statutory agencies to approach violent crime in a different way. We worked to encourage people to dialogue out of conflict rather than stab or shoot each other.

The Centre for Peaceful Solutions and Maria worked successfully to train this critical mass of people which I saw as the first steps of our journey together. I fully support her vision. We have several more projects underway.

MY REFLECTIONS

I have witnessed the impact of the DRM on people from all different backgrounds. And not to put too fine a point on it – it changes people's lives for the better.

I often ponder what if the DRM became part of:

- Education, so young people are taught how to dialogue out of violence.
- The Health and Social Care professions, allowing better understanding and care for the most vulnerable in our communities.
- Prison services, to aid rehabilitation of prisoners and to reduce offending
- Police forces, so officers are able to engage better with the diverse communities across the UK and beyond – reducing retaliation whenever possible and saving lives.
- Communities, bridging divides, particularly relevant with some of the racist and homophobic behaviours we are currently experiencing in the UK.
- In abuse cases, to give the survivor a true voice and to break the cycle of violence for themselves and their families.
- Social media, as the language and ethos of the future for their sites.

I dare to imagine what the world would look like.

ANDY

MY STORY

I am currently a senior director in an inner London borough council. I have responsibility for Community Safety and our borough is affected by every type of crime you can imagine. Daily, I receive reports of extremism and terrorism, domestic violence, gangs, child sexual exploitation, bullying and homophobic violence. Before this I worked for the Metropolitan Police Service for many years. My final post was as a Chief Superintendent in the London Borough of Brent.



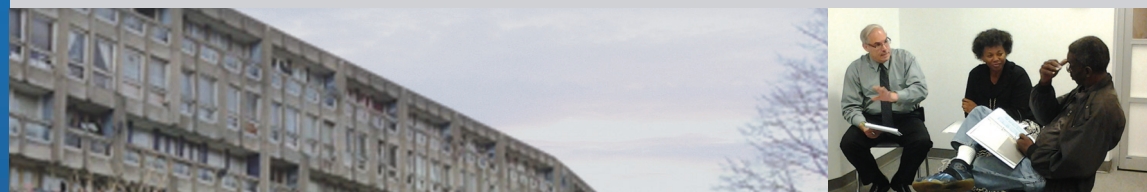
MY JOURNEY

A cop for more than 30 years, I worked as a uniformed officer, a detective on teams such as vice, murder and the infamous flying squad. I was the police sponsor of Not Another Drop. We were in a borough with gangs and violent crime being perpetrated on almost a daily basis. Gang retaliation was common place – my greatest fear was that innocent members of the public or my staff would be caught up in the tit-for-tat style crime. Unfortunately this happened with the death of an innocent seven year old child – Toni-Ann Byfield, murdered in her father's flat as she was of an age where she would be able to identify her father's killer. At this point I knew we had to adapt our approach and I was willing to try innovative evidence-based ideas. CPS provided the training that could be used by police and community alike. We trained a cohort of officers and they recommended the pilot was extended.

MY REFLECTIONS

This training was new and not the traditional type or style of police training the Metropolitan Police is used to, but I was convinced to "give it a go". I was impressed. It had the greatest impact on my front line officers in Harlesden – their engagement with the community went from strength to strength and complaints from the public went down. It was particularly good when dealing with young people, which was inherently difficult due to stop & search, the community tensions, the ongoing violence and the always tough relationship between the police and parts of the community. I ensured the training was compulsory for all probationary officers coming into the Borough. It should be compulsory training for all police officers and PCSOs before they work with the public.

SARAH



MY STORY

Working for over a decade in community regeneration and Social Housing, I saw first hand how conflict destroys families and communities. I started to suspect that most of the antisocial behaviour complaints and neighbour disputes were caused by nothing more than a lack of communication.

I believe people are often afraid to have uncomfortable or awkward conversations because they are afraid they won't be able to deal with other people's reactions - so they simply don't attempt it. Unaddressed issues don't magically go away. I have seen how they fester and breed resentment until eventually, someone moves or a complaint is made to a third party such as the landlord, council or police - or they just explode and statutory services intervene.

MY JOURNEY

In 2013, I attended training with Maria and David. I was particularly impressed by the DRM technique and the way it guides the mediation through various stages and levels of understanding feelings.

MY REFLECTIONS

I have used the DRM in both private and professional arenas with profound results, and it has given me confidence to have difficult conversations.

SOME FEEDBACK FROM OUR WORK IN NEW YORK

JEAN

MY STORY

I am a 38 year old Haitian American male and in my early years at school – I was diagnosed with dyslexia. I also suffered with a speech impediment and because of these challenges in my early life I was put in special ed.



MY JOURNEY

In this training not only did I learn how to communicate in a more effective way, I also learned to listen better and understand the feelings and needs of other people. The training should be taught in schools as early as kindergarten.

MY REFLECTIONS

It's helped my marriage become stronger listening to the needs of my wife. It's helped build a relationship between me and my sister. It's also helped both my little boys on how they communicate with each other and others in school. My younger boys were very frustrated in kindergarten because he was having challenges expressing himself in school. In the training I was given a child's needs and feelings sheets. I posted the sheet in their room to practice how to express their needs and feelings. After some weeks of practice my son brought home his progress report. It was incredible to see the progress in verbal behaviour. One day I went to his room and noticed the feelings and needs sheet was missing from the wall. When the boys came in, I asked them where their sheets were? One of them explained to me that he needed to help his friend with how he was feeling. This is why I feel that the work that Maria and David are doing is so important. It helped my boys communicate their emotions intelligently.



CLEATHUR

MY STORY

I had a pretty rough life starting from a young boy. I'm 55 years old. I spent a lot of my life incarcerated. My last time in jail was for gun possession. Since then I've been working hard in putting my life back together.

MY JOURNEY

I learnt there are choices in life and it's up to you to make the right or wrong ones. David and Maria have showed me there is a way to deal with life on life's terms, and how to go about it with free will.

MY REFLECTIONS

This training has given me a new outlook on life. It has helped me with my relationship. It has let me look at who I am, who I want to be and what I want to accomplish in life. It's given me the strength to stay on the right track.

MY STORY

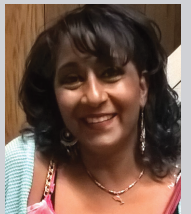
I'm a mother of five children. I came to COTA after my 26 year old son was murdered with a knife. I was left hopeless and my other four children were left victims of the homicide too as I was struggling to function as their mother.

MY JOURNEY

Maria Arpa helped me to overcome my son's death. I learnt how to communicate in a nonviolent, better way and how to navigate the judicial system without being bitter.

MY REFLECTIONS

I used the DRM to connect with other broken families and my children. My four children are slowly getting better in their depression and we are talking more about the death and how we can move forward in our lives.



DIANA

DEMAR



MY STORY

I am a 40 year old male and have been incarcerated three times totaling sixteen years in prison. At some point in my incarceration, I realised that I wanted to use my experiences to help others going down a similar road. I joined COTA which gave me the opportunity to do just that.

MY JOURNEY

I found the training interesting and highly educational in terms of information and perspective, changing my view of conflicts and getting past the feelings to the needs underneath. I learned a lot about techniques for overcoming barriers and listening.

MY REFLECTIONS

DRM has affected my life in a positive way. It also has helped with the work I do with COTA especially as it pertains to conflict resolution.

SALAMAT

MY STORY

I am from Iraq, a country with lots of history of conflict. I was imprisoned there for my beliefs.

MY JOURNEY

In my experience two things make people violent; they can't express themselves or understand the other.

MY REFLECTIONS

The training helped me know how to let people express what they want and request what they need, and how to listen to and understand others. I felt like I caught the keys to unlock conflict and become a mediator in a professional way. The training mixes well with my other experience and religious principles. I have tested it with some people and they have told me their lives have been completely changed. I am working on getting the Iraqi government to make it part of teacher training.



MARIA AND DAVID



OUR STORY

We met through our work. I had developed the Dialogue Road Map and really wanted to test it as a way of life. My background was poverty and the slums, David's was privilege and education. Both of us had experienced violence and powerlessness. We both understood how the mainstream systems of society perpetuate the very problems they purport to solve.

OUR JOURNEY

In 2005 I asked David to become one of the founding trustees of a charity I wanted to set up called the Centre for Peaceful Solutions. My rationale was that everyone wants peace but some of us go about getting it in ways which bring about the opposite. David agreed and decided to follow this path with me. Very quickly it became clear that we were soul mates and life partners and we challenged ourselves to live the process and model the Dialogue Road Map in our personal and professional life. We practiced our craft, lived it, breathed it and developed it. What started as a model for mediating violent crime has become a model for social transformation. It changes people's lives and we started with our own.

OUR REFLECTIONS

A peaceful world needs people to communicate from the heart and make collaborative relationships. Whether in a family, a school, a statutory service or a workplace, we need to start from our common humanity and co-create a world where every person can take responsibility for everything they say and everything they do.

OUR VISION

A peaceful world needs people to communicate from the heart and make collaborative relationships. Whether in a family, a school, a statutory service or a workplace, we need to start from our common humanity and co-create a world where every person can take responsibility for everything they say and everything they do.

PRISONS

INTEGRATING THE DRM IN DARTMOOR PRISON SINCE 2016

“I have seen something amazing happen today”

Tim, Prisoner DRM Facilitator



- I have seen a young 22 year old lad (with a long history of extreme violence) tell a room full of more established older men that he has as much right to be on the wing as anyone else. I have seen this lad make a direct request of others that he'll have much more respect for them if they address his behaviour directly to him rather than running to tell officers. I have seen him admit that sometimes he can annoy others, be immature, loud and out-of-order.
- I have seen one established prisoner take an opportunity to address some behaviour issues with the young lad. He, very directly and bluntly, told him some of the things he was doing which were alienating the wing.
- I have seen the young lad receive this criticism well and agree to continue to try and modify and mature, so long as the wing could support him and give him a chance to change.
- I have seen three prisoners in their 60s and 70s really listen to his requests and agree to cut him some slack, to tell him when he annoys them and to help and support his efforts to change when they can.
- In short, I have seen the most honest, direct dialogue I have ever seen in prison. I have seen this done in a peaceful and supportive way. I have seen agreements reached and relationships built. I have seen true community. I have seen DRM work.
- It has left me feeling hugely encouraged and like there'd be no need for officers, adjudications, pepper spray, batons and cuffs if human interaction always looked like this.

COMMUNITIES



KALIKALOS HOLISTIC COMMUNITY - INTEGRATING THE DRM SINCE 2016

Kalikalos is a network of three authentic communities that is more than just a retreat centre. Staff, guests, workshop participants and volunteers commit to living and learning together. Everyone participates in the rhythms of a healthy and holistic lifestyle to support the transformational learning that goes on in the workshops. The Centres operate from April to October in the Pelion Region of Greece.

The community have chosen to embrace the DRM to support decision making and collaboration between the three centres and as the method and process for resolving conflict in the community where ever it may show itself.

Very grateful for the opportunity to spend a week on a course with Maria learning the Dialogue Road Map. Maria is inspiring, fun and generally a wonderful human being. I learnt a huge amount about resolving conflict that I can apply in my work and my everyday life. Thank you!

[Louise, Kalikalos, 2018](#)

If there is magic here, this is the magic of being empathic (for myself and the others) and being able to express it thanks to the DRM. Many thanks to Maria & David to bring their skills, humour and beings in Kalikalos community.

[Nina, Kalikalos, 2018](#)

I had the privilege to attend one of Maria's and David's workshops at the Holistic Community Center Kalikalos in Greece. I am impressed by their ability to safely guide our community through conflicts and emotional issues. Only after learning to know and use their Dialogue Road Map we now find ourselves confident and able to deal with organisational issues. I am amazed to realize to which extend interpersonal conflicts block efficient and transparent decision making.

[Friederike, 2016](#)



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