

## Summary of NVR & NA work 2015 – Flemish pedagogues & trainers

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### 1 Flemish pedagogues & trainers working in schools.

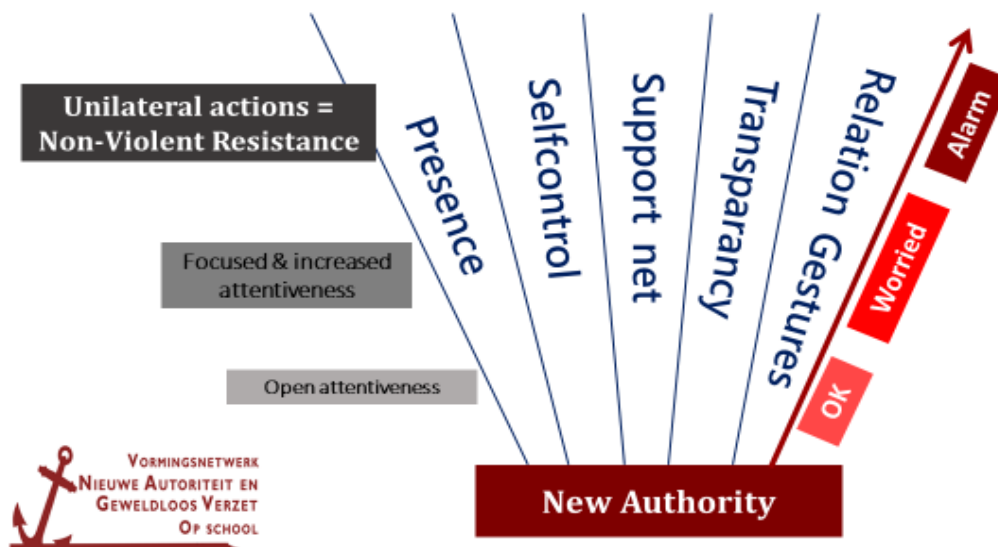
We are a group of Flemish professionals, all working in schools or with teachers. We strongly believe that NVR has a lot to offer for schoolteams in working with students' troublesome behaviour. In 2012, we started to implement NVR in schools.

In the past three years we regularly met

- to set up a support network of teachers, pedagogues and trainers, all of them strongly believing in the values of the NA/NVR concept and attitude for teachers and schoolteams
- to explore the most effective ways give notoriety to NA/NVR in Flemish schools (e.g. by publishing articles in different educational magazines)
- to discuss what conditions should be met to implement successfully this new way of thinking and responding to children's troublesome behaviour
- to exchange our first experiences in introducing NA-NVR at schools: what is effective in our approach, what isn't... How do we succeed in meeting the real needs of teachers in establishing their authority in an appropriate way?
- to stimulate and support each other in dealing with and reacting effectively to the resistance we sometimes meet in schoolteams.

In 2015 we were happy to create our own website: [www.NAGVopschool.be](http://www.NAGVopschool.be) (NA-NVR at school).

### 2 FIVE PILLARS of the NA/NVR-concept



The image we created is a fan that can be opened more or less, depending on what the authority figure estimates to be needed in this particular situation. In fact it depends on how worried he/she is about a child or a group of children as well as the possibilities of cooperation with the child or the group. The more authority-figures are worried and the more a child shows its (self)destructive behaviour, the more five basic pillars need to be activated. That's why the figure gets broader to the top. When a child's troublesome behaviour gets worse, it may cost the authority-figures more time, more resources, more energy and a larger network to establish. But all five pillars are already activated from the basic level where troublesome behaviour is not at all visible. The authority-figure is constantly aware of possible problems that may occur.

At the base there is "New Authority" as a basic attitude, standing for 'joint' or 'committed' responsibility of the teacher. We have chosen five core-elements as part of this authority, which we extensively and thoroughly discussed in our trainers group. We focused on what elements are essential for the NA/NVR-concept as well as in what order we want to show them in working with teachers and schoolteams. This is the result:

- **Presence**, no discussion that this is the first pillar to introduce. We didn't take "resistance" as an element, but feel in fact this is part of "presence".
- **Relation gestures** are also part of the presence of NA, but we introduce them as an extra element, because we're convinced this has to be emphasized when teachers have to deal with children causing trouble in their classroom.
- **Selfcontrol**: in our experience, talking about escalations and the relational problems they cause, is very helpful for teachers to understand what is wrong with the current practices in schools. Selfcontrol and the idea that you can't control your pupils, are crucial to work towards NA en NVR. That's why we introduce this before the other very important pillar in schools: a good working support net.
- **Support net**: no need to say that teachers are not that good in asking help, and that there are a lot of problems with recruiting help for teachers (by colleagues, parents,...).
- **Transparency**: this can be seen as an element of recruiting support, but we mention it explicitly, because otherwise teachers will easily "forget" it. And we think it's really a crucial element in changing the school culture towards a safe place for everyone.

We developed this five-pillar-fan to use in schoolteams, in trainings, but also in supervisions.

We experience it to be useful:

- to give an audience a quick idea what NA/NVR stands for
- to talk about the differences between traditional and new authority
- to explain the tree levels of vigilant care
- to set up exercises, such as:  
*"which element of NA is already present at school, and which element needs to be developed more?"*,  
or in a case of dealing with problematic behaviour of one child:  
*"what did we already do and on which level of vigilant care can we 'post' this case?"*

### 3 Implementing NA/NVR is a long term process

On the one hand, we meet teachers who see the introduction of NVR as an opportunity to get traditional authority restored (*“When the entire set of the usual punishment doesn’t work, there is now the sit-in we can try...”*). Back to a distant position, to controlling and even excluding pupils... with an eminent risk for violence and with no or little respect for pupils’ self-determination, their use of NVR is far from the NVR-spirit. Working on the two first levels of vigilant care can help these teachers to see why their approach is often failing.

On the other hand – and we tend to say that this occurs a lot more – we meet teachers who struggle in themselves with capturing their own appropriate authority position. They tend to perceive NVR as severe and insensitive.

In our current society there may be several reasons for this phenomenon:

- first of all reacting differently than one is used to asks for new skills. Many teachers are familiar with “punishment and reward” as their basic strategies in education. *“Tell us what to do if none of these work effectively?”* is a frequently occurring reaction
- strongly believing in the effect of keeping on talking without acting (whereas resistance needs action)
- being afraid of losing confidence, losing contact with pupils. Not accepting that the degree of confidence also depends on the pupil’s behaviour (confidence is no blind faith!)
- a strong conviction in the pupil’s right of privacy (unconditionally) and also being afraid for the pupil’s reaction when showing strong authority

‘Talking to pupils’ and ‘having good relationship with pupils’... are highly appreciated by teachers who really want the best for their pupils’ development and growth.

In dealing with pupils’ troublesome behaviour, these values may not be sufficient to stop pupils’ harmful or self-destructing conduct. When teachers get frustrated or feel helpless, they need to set up a powerful authority relationship, which requires a strong, resisting attitude, and non-violent action instead of talking.

Thinking differently about one’s authority, responding otherwise than one is used to (perhaps for years already) takes time... For most teachers it feels like giving up certainties, not knowing where to be led to...

We believe that the only way to deal with these considerations and concerns teachers express, is to listen to them and to engage a dialogue, to meet their real needs and help them to establish a strong and appropriate authority as a team.

If you’d like to get in touch, you can find us at [www.NAGVopschool.be](http://www.NAGVopschool.be) (in Dutch) or mail to [Hilde.Leonard@pandora.be](mailto:Hilde.Leonard@pandora.be) or [Hilaire.Dolfeyn@skynet.be](mailto:Hilaire.Dolfeyn@skynet.be).