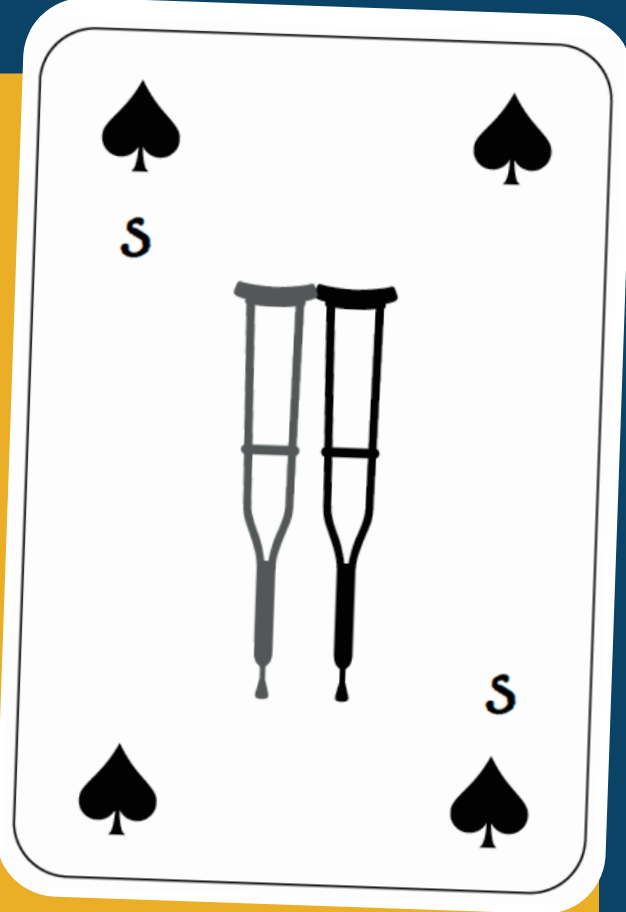




# Enrico Quarello and Penelope Rackett 10 Cards to Support Fragile Parenting: a training model imbued with VIG

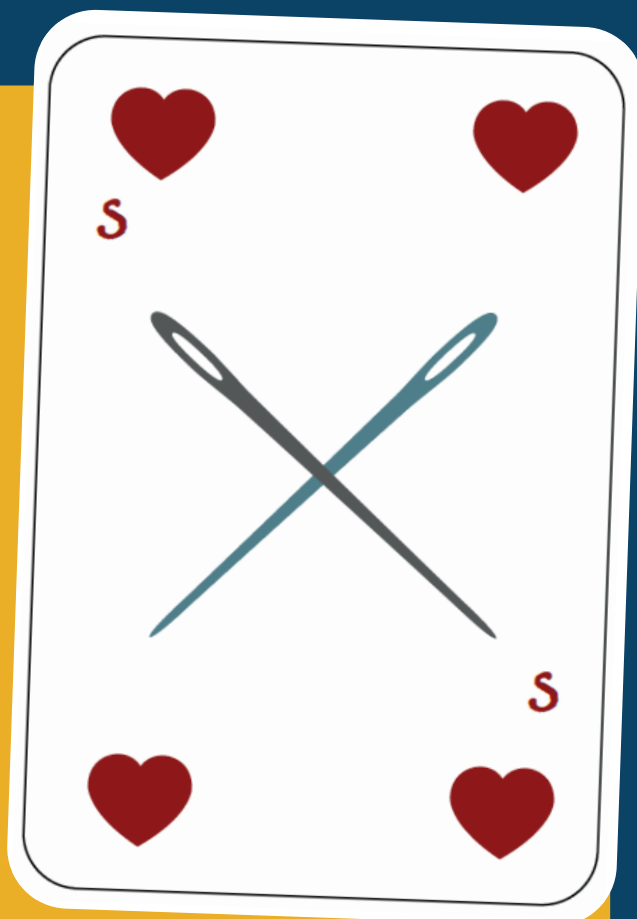
The hypothesis behind the model is that fragile parents have three main areas of vulnerability that practitioners have to take into account: traumatic reactivations, trust deficits, and devalued self-image. Such areas of fragility risk activating vicious circles within which parents and practitioners can become trapped: the vicious circles of fear, mistrust and judgment. To transform vicious circles into virtuous circles – of safety, trust and value – it is necessary for practitioners to put in place “good relational ingredients”: the 10 cards are metaphors for these “good ingredients”.

## The Crutch



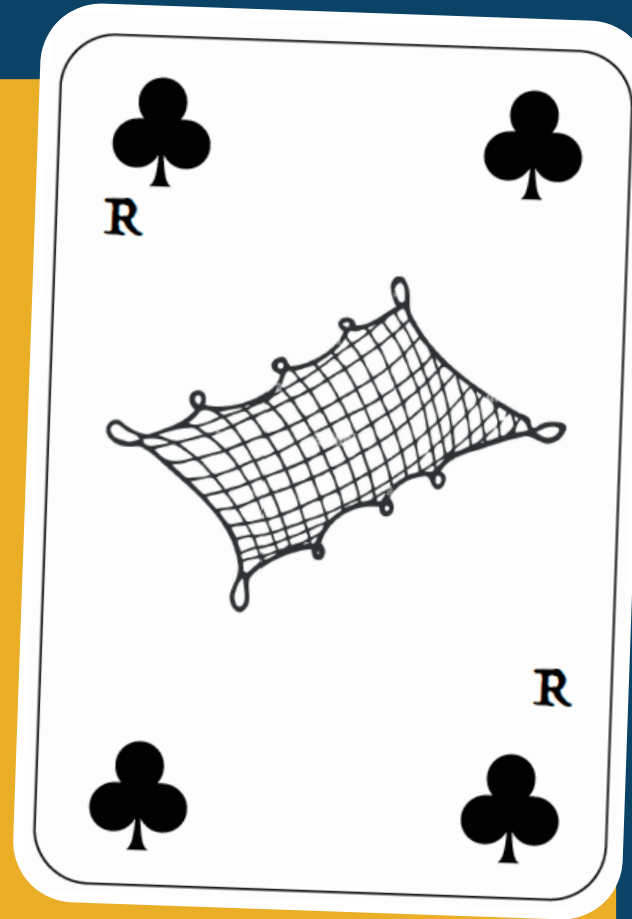
The Crutch is the ethical card of the compassionate gaze. You are dealing with a person in need: can you do something to soothe and benefit them? It is a VIG card based on the concept of “scaffolding” and acting in accordance with ethical beliefs and values. It acts on the virtuous circle of trust and value.

## The Tailor



The Tailor corresponds with VIG's Helping Question. It is a card for redistribution of power. Ask the parent in which direction they want to go. There is no such thing as a perfect garment, everyone needs a garment tailored to them. It acts on virtuous circles of safety, trust and values

## The Circus Network



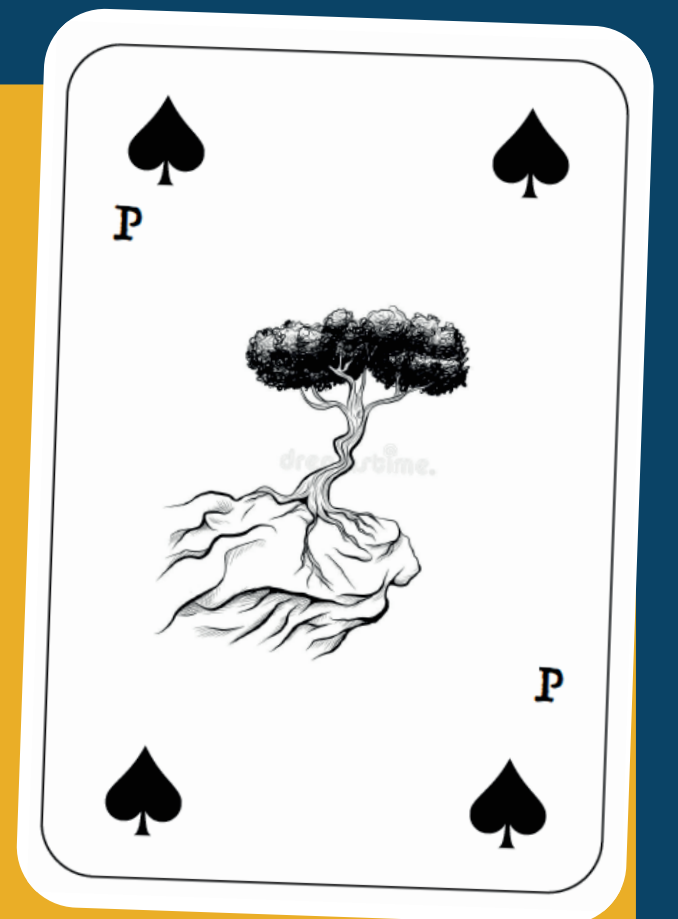
The Circus Network is the card of multiple carrying responsibilities and it is a safety and security card. Don't build exclusive relationships with post-traumatic functioning parents (Liotti), it can be dangerous for you and for the parent. Create networks, “make a circle” with colleagues, without them you can't do anything, together with you they can do much more. It acts on the virtuous circle of safety

## The Team



The Team represents the support networks of Non Violence Resistance and it is the card of belonging. Involve people who love parents and their children in the intervention, use collaborative language, share choices, split responsibilities. It acts on virtuous circles of trust and values

## The Plant That Grows on the Stone



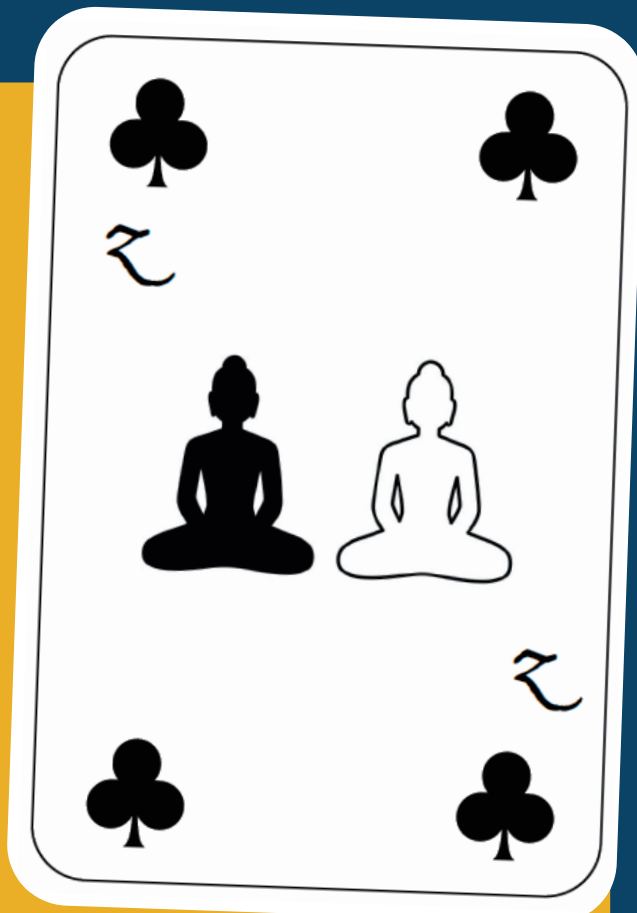
The Plant That Grows on the Stone represents the VIG focus on resources and is the card of values. Focus on the emerging or almost invisible strengths, the effort the parent is putting into it and how they are persevering. Look at the good things that you have done so that you can see the good things done by the parent so that in turn he or she he can see “the good” in their child. It acts on the virtuous circle of values.

## The Guide Dog



The Guide Dog is the ‘benevolent guiding’ proposed by Gilbert Pregno and is the card of responsibility and service. If the parent doesn't know what to do, take him by the hand and make him walk a short stretch of “good walking”. The card invokes the function of VIG's Attuned Guiding. It acts on the virtuous circles of security and trust

## The Zen Monk



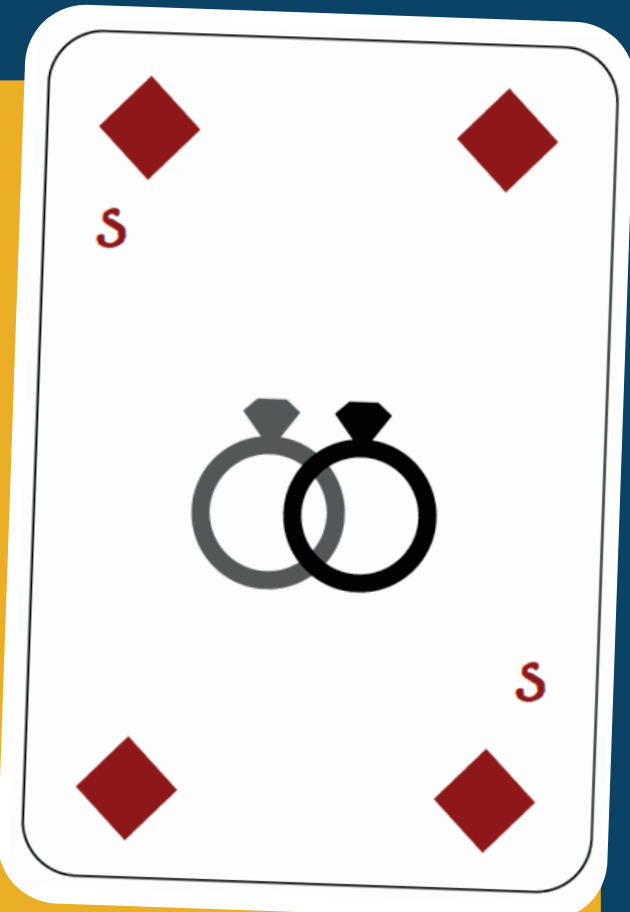
The Zen Monk is the emotional card of self-control. Strike when the iron is cold, says the NVR. Name and manage your emotions so they can support and not get in the way of the process of attunement with your client, says VIG. It acts on the virtuous circle of safety.

## The Fan



The Fan is the emotional card of hope: it is both VIG and NVR. Take sides, encourage, express good prophecies, and finally celebrate the parent's successes big and small. It acts on the virtuous circles of trust and values.

## The Wedding Ring



The Wedding Ring represents fidelity to the context of help and is the ethical card of courage. Respect agreements, be loyal. VIG also pushes the practitioner to strenuously defend the boundaries of the helping intervention, renouncing any moments of critical judgement. It acts on the virtuous circle of trust.

## The Joker



The Joker represents the secret ingredient of every practitioner: that particular competence, quality, personal and/or professional inclination matured within relationships with one's own family.

## OUTCOMES

In issue 366 of 2023 of the Italian magazine *Animazione Sociale*, the focus “Fragile parenting: supporting with care” was published. In the 3 articles, written by operators and consultants of Paradigma and Riflessi, the model of the 10 Cards is presented.

We subsequently held a workshop on using the cards in practice, to which 500 people signed up, with a waiting list. We have also been inundated with requests for more training on this system, on VIG and creating an actual pack of cards for practitioners, which we are in the process of doing.



The main objective of the 10 cards is to provide work teams with “a common language of quick communication to agree and carry out effective strategies to support parenting”. In training the cards are first presented and then “played” through specific techniques:

“Rational” reflection on “case studies”: what are the areas of fragility in these parents? Which cards could help practitioners? **Metaphorical representations:** participants are invited to create metaphors related to “case studies” through drawings and sculptures (a technique typical of family therapy). The trainer uses one or more cards to stimulate the construction of metaphors. **Role plays:** the practitioners involved alternate in the roles of fragile parents and practitioner. The interviews are designed and managed using the cards as “navigators” of the interventions. **Case supervision:** cases are discussed within a group using the cards. What cards have been played? What did they produce? What new cards could we play?

The “why” of my Joker card: in subgroups, always through metaphorical techniques, we search for the cards that “have been played” in the operator's own family, building connections between personal and professional.

The invention of new ‘metaphor guides’: the group of practitioners is invited, based on their own experience, to invent new cards that could be useful in working with parents. This approach of the 10 cards is based on different theoretical frameworks that offer “counterintuitive” and “countercurrent” indications in the work of supporting parents in difficulty: **the relational systemic model, the theory of motivational systems** by Gianni Liotti, **the concept of “benevolent directivity”** expressed by Gilbert Pregno, **the model of Non-Violence Resistance** by Haim Omer and **Video Interaction Guidance**.

The cards have been used by the project “Legami Nutrienti” (Nurturing Bonds) in Naples, led by the Cooperativa L'Orsa

Maggiore and many partners from the public and private social sectors, including **CISMAI, the Italian Coordination of Services against Child Abuse and Maltreatment**.

This is some of the feedback from Home Visiting practitioners using VIG and the 10 Cards:

“When we have to make a difficult choice, we name a card and we understand each other instantly. Very reassuring!”

“We have the cards hanging in the office so everyone can keep an eye on them. They guide us silently to do good and useful things”.

“Since we did the VIG with the mothers and we use the Cards, we have perhaps also changed as parents to our own children. For the better”.

There is a clear need for practitioners to be supported in creating virtuous circles through their relationships with parents.

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Paradigma is a social cooperative based in Turin (IT) that deals with the protection of minors and support for “fragile parenting”.

Riflessi is a training agency that designs supervision and training courses for practitioners in this sector. Respect for parents ‘in difficulty’ as people has always ethically and methodologically inspired our way of working. Since 2016 we have invited Hilary Kennedy and Penelope Rackett to Italy to hold seminars and training courses on VIG. As a result, VIG practice has “benevolently contaminated” our thoughts, our methodology and our training approach.

After years of experimentation in the field, we have developed a training model for practitioners – social workers, educators, psychologists – called the 10 cards to support them when working with relationships of fragile parenting.