

RECOGNITION OF PA BY PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS by Dr. Steve Miller

1. American Bar Association. 1991, 2013. Children Held Hostage, Clawar & Rivlin. Children Held Hostage is advertised and promoted on the ABA website. Clawar & Rivlin refer to brainwashed children instead of alienated children they create links between their work and the PA theory. For example, they define alienation as "one result of a programming/brainwashing process that often includes the estrangement of the child from the target parent. Also, the bibliography of Children Held Hostage includes 23 articles or books published by Gardner. Also 33% of the references in the bibliography (126 out of 383) had "parental alienation" "parental alienation syndrome," or "alienation in the title of the paper, chapter, or book. Thus, the research of Clawar and Rivlin related closely to PA theory. (Children Held Hostage found that 90% of the time the relationship between parents and children improved when the contact was increased).

2. State Bar of Texas, 2018. Diana S. Friendman of Goranson Bain and Dr. Richard Warshak presented class/article on Parent Alienation and Childhood Trauma at the State Bar of Texas 44th Annual Advanced Family Law Course, August 13-16, 2018 in San Antonio, TX:

Notwithstanding questionable testimony about childhood trauma, there is no dispute that some children do appear deeply distressed at the prospect of spending time with a parent. Their cognitive distortions, polarized views of their parents, negative feelings, and belligerent behavior are examples of a "Parent-Child Relational Problem": "Typically, the parent-child relational problem is associated with impaired functioning in behavioral, cognitive, or affective domains." AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION, DIAGNOSTIC AND STATISTICAL MANUAL OF MENTAL DISORDERS 715 (5th ed. 2013). According to the DSM-5: "Cognitive problems may include negative attributions of the other's intentions, hostility toward or scapegoating of the other, and unwarranted feelings of estrangement." These cognitive problems are aspects of the alienated child's relationship with the rejected parent.

The link between the child's problems and the manner in which parents handle their conflict is captured by the DSM-5 condition termed "Children Affected by Parental Relationship Distress," a general category that includes children who have been adversely affected by distress or violence in their parents' relationship, children who feel caught in the middle and struggle with maintaining good feelings toward both parents, and children who are irrationally alienated from a parent. William Bernet, Marianne Z. Wamboldt, William E. Narrow, Child Affected by Parental Relationship Distress, 55 J. AMER. ACAD. CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIAT. 571 (2016).

3. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. 1997 AACAP published Practice Parameters for Child Custody Evaluation, an AACAP Official Action that was adopted by the governing body of the organization. The practice parameters included a section with the heading Parental Alienation. AACAP also published suggestions for parenting called Facts for Families. Facts for Families explains the presence of parent/child contact problems. **PA has been addressed in presentations at the annual meetings of AACAP and in its journal, the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. For example, in 2016 the Journal published CAPRD (Bernet, ... see #2 above) which explains how children who**

experienced PA could receive that diagnosis from the DSM-5. AACAP has recognized the reality and importance of PA.

4. Association of Family and Conciliation Courts

2005 AFCC published Guidelines for Parenting Coordination. Appendix A of that document “Recommendations for Comprehensive Training of Parenting Coordinators” consists of several modules pertaining to various aspects of this topic. Module 2 of the recommendations for training pertains to “Family Dynamics in Separation and Divorce,” which includes “dealing with high conflict parents” and “the dynamics of child alignments, estrangements, and alienation.” Thus, the authors of the AFCC document used standard terminology for the scenarios that may occur in high-conflict families: alignments, for the tendency of some children to be more emotionally involved with one parent and less involved with the other parent; estrangement, the rejection of a parent for a good reason, such as abuse or neglect; an alienation, the rejection of a parent without a good reason, but due to indoctrination by the preferred parent. The Task Force that created the Guidelines for Parenting Coordination included the following mental health professionals: Linda Fieldstone (chair), Robin Deutsch, Barbara Fidler, Jonathan Gould, Joan Kelly, and Matthew J. Sullivan, as well as several attorneys and judges.

In 2019 AFCC convened the PC Guidelines Revision Task Force for purpose of gathering info from world-wide jurisdictions regarding the practice of pc and incorporating data from the social science and legal literature in order to update the original Guidelines. Thus in 2019 AFCC Guidelines also included an appendix, Recommendations for Comprehensive Training of Parenting Coordinators,” which included several references to PA. For example, the “Recommendations for Comprehensive Training” stated that parenting coordinators should have training in the “continuum of parent-child contact problems (e.g. affinity, alignments, realistic estrangement, alienation, hybrid) and levels of severity in cases involving resist-refuse dynamics.

In 2006 AFCC published Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluations. In discussing the education and training for custody evaluations, that document refers to the need to understand PA in this way: “Areas of specialized training include ... the assessment of children’s resistance to spending time with a parent figure and allegations of attempts to alienate children from a parent, parent figure or significant other. Task Force: Leslie Drozd, Kathryn Kuehnle, and Philip M. Stahl.

PA has frequently. Been a topic in AFCC’s quarterly journal, Family Court Review, and at their national regional conferences.

AFCC June 2020 is pleased to announce that the Judicial Council of California has approved the webinars in the AFCC Special Webinar Series as continuing education for child custody evaluators, child custody mediators, and recommending counselors, as shown below.

[Parental Alienation in the United States Courts: 1985-2018*](#)

Demosthenes Lorandos, PhD, JD

June 18, 2020, 3:00pm-4:30pm Eastern Time US
Registration closes at 9:00am Eastern Time US on June 17, 2020

Parental Alienation and Misinformation Proliferation*

William Bernet, MD

June 25, 2020, 3:00pm-4:30pm Eastern Time US
Registration closes at 9:00am Eastern Time US on June 24, 2020

5. La Societa Italiana de Neuropsichiatria dell'Infanzia e dell'Adolescenza. 2007 Italian Society of Child and Adolescent Neuropsychiatry (SINPIA) PUBLISHED A DOCUMENT TITLED GUIDELIES ON THE SUBJECT OF CHILD ABUSE. That official documents of SINPIA stated "Psychological abuse includes: acts of rejection, psychological terrorism, exploitation, isolation and removal of the child from the social context A further form of psychological abuse may be the alienation of a parent figure by the other until the cooperation of a child in PAS. The publication by the child and adolescent neuropsychiatrists of Italy demonstrates how an awareness of the importance of PA moved from U.S. to Europe.

6. American Psychological Association

Over the years the APA has addressed the topic of PA on several occasions. All relationships need to be observed. 1994 APA published Guidelines. Guidelines bibliography includes three of Gardner's books: Family Evaluation in Child Custody Mediation, Arbitration, and Litigation 1989. The PAS: A Guide for Mental Health and Legal Professionals 1992. True and False Accusations of Child Abuse 1992.

Not favorable re: PAS, but more supportive of PA. 2015 the Handbook of Forensic Psychology includes a chapter which has a heading section titled Child Alienation. 2018 created a Working Group to Review Scientific Literature for High Conflict Family Relationships. Established after Craig Childress petitioned APA to set up a committee to study the topic of PA.

7. American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers

2015 Child Centered Residential Guidelines. Doesn't include the words pa but describes the problem.

8. American Academy of Pediatrics

2016 published a clinical report called Helping "Children and Families Deal with Divorce and Separation. The report said "Alienation of the child and the targeted parent is a frequent problem that needs practical professional input to correct the negative effects on all parties.

9. American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children

2016 APSAC published a Position Paper on Allegations of Child Maltreatment and Intimate Partner Violence in Divorce/Parental Relationship Dissolution. Explicitly refers to process of alienation.

2017 published The Investigation and Determination of Suspected Psychological Maltreatment of Children and Adolescents. Discusses pa-related psychological abuse (belittling, degrading significant relationships with the child such as parents. Modeling Permitting betraying the trust of or being cruel to another person. Restricting or interfering with the child's important relationships. Coercing the child's submission through withdrawal of love, Threatening violence or perpetrating violence against a child's loved ones or objects, placing the child in a loyalty conflict, placing unreasonable limitations on social interactions with family members.

One way to demonstrate that a theory or topic has been accepted by the scientific community is to show that professional organizations have adopted, accepted, or endorsed the theory. Of course, it is not required to prove that 100 percent of the members of a professional organization agree with a particular concept or principle. In the last 20 years, important professional organizations in the U.S. – **the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, the American Psychological Association, the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children – have either directly or indirectly recognized the concept of PA.**

Family members affected by PA may be appropriately identified with three diagnoses from the Other Conditions chapter. The clinician should select one or more of those DSM-5 diagnoses, depending on the focus of the practitioner's evaluation.

If the focus is on the condition of the child, the clinician could use CAPRD

If the focus is on the relationship between the child and the rejected parent, use parent-child relational problem;

If the focus is on the activities of the AP, use Child Psychological Abuse.