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PAS, Parental Alienation Syndrome, 8 trekk

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The general pattern of characteristics PAS children display during and after the divorce have been described by [Gardner \(1992\)](#) as follows:

1. **Campaign of denigration:** PAS children denigrate the "lost" parent completely, particularly in the presence of the alienating parent. The children express a profuse hatred for the lost parent. Initially, the children may denigrate each parent in the presence of the other. Eventually they learn that the denigration of the non-custodial or alienated parent is beneficial within the custodial home. Subsequently, the child rejects the lost parent completely.

NORSK:Kampanje for nedvurdering: PAS barn rakker ned på "lost" foreldre helt, spesielt i nærvær av den fiendtliggjørende forelder. Barna uttrykker et kraftig hat for den tapte forelder. I første omgang kan barnet rakke ned på hver forelder i nærvær av den andre. Etter hvert lærer de at nedvurdering av samværsforelderen eller fiendtlig gjort forelder er gunstig for omsorg hjemme. Deretter avviser barnet den tapte forelder helt.

2. **The children's unfounded rationalizations:** The children base their denigration on rationalizations that are weak or frivolous, e.g. "she snores in her sleep". Statements such as these are often made with a complete lack of ambivalence by the children. The alienating parent, as well, does not question such statements as the bases for denigration and further uses the children's statements as evidence of the lost parent's inadequacy.

NORSK: Barnas ubegrunnede rasjonaliseringer: Barna baserer sin nedvurdering på rasjonaliseringer som er svake eller fjollete, f.eks "hun snorker i søvne". Utsagn som disse er ofte laget med en fullstendig mangel på ambivalens av barna. Den fiendtliggjørende forelder, stiller ikke spørsmål ved slike uttalelser som basis for nedvurdering og bruker videre barnas uttalelser som bevis på den tapte foreldrenes utilstrekkelighet.

3. **Dichotomization of the parents:** The alienating parent is perceived by the child as encompassing only positive qualities and as such the children attempt to express themselves as "perfect little photocopies" (Goldwater, 1991 p. 126) of the alienating parent. On the other hand, the lost parent is believed to encompass only negative qualities. This negative attitude is generalized to events that the children and lost parent have shared. Even events that the children once enjoyed are now remembered as being forced, not enjoyed, or never even remembered.

NORSK: Dikotomisering av foreldrene: Den fiendtliggjørende forelder oppfattes av barnet som inneha bare positive kvaliteter og som sådan forsøker barna å uttrykke seg selv som "perfekte små fotokopier" (Goldwater, 1991 s. 126) av fiendtliggjørende forelder. På den annen side er den tapte forelder antatt å inneha bare negative egenskaper. Denne negative holdningen er generalisert til hendelser som barn og den tapte foreldre har delt. Selv hendelser som barna en gang likte blir nå husket som påtvunget, ikke likte, eller glemt.

4. **The independent thinker phenomenon:** The children present the decision to reject the parent as their own. The alienating parent reinforces this contention by making such statements

as "I can't force her to see her dad, if she does not want to". Further, the claim that the decision to reject the parent was the child's own is made suspect by the child's use of language and phrases that are developmentally inappropriate and indicative of the alienating parent's influence.

NORSK:Den selvstendig tenker fenomen: Barna presenterer beslutningen om å avvise foreldre som sine egne. Den fiendtliggjørende forelder forsterker denne påstanden ved å gjøre slike uttalelser som "*Jeg kan ikke tvinge henne til å se faren hennes, hvis hun ikke ønsker det*". Videre er kravet at beslutningen om å avvise foreldre var barnets egen, mistenkelige ved barns bruk av språk og uttrykk som er utviklingsmessig upassende og tyder på den fiendtlig gjørende foreldrenes innflytelse.

5. **Automatic love of the alienating parent:** the children automatically and reflexively support the alienating parent. This automatic love may be a consequence of the belief that the alienating parent is an ideal or perfect person or that the children perceive that parent as weak and in need of support and defending.

NORSK:Automatisk kjærlighet fremmedgjørende foreldre: Barna vil automatisk og refleksivt støtte fiendtlig gjørende forelder. Denne automatiske kjærlighet kan være en konsekvens av troen på at den fiendtlig gjørende forelder er et ideal eller perfekt person, eller at barna oppfatter at foreldre som svak og har behov for støtte og forsvare.

6. **Absence of guilt:** The children do not express any feelings of guilt about the circumstances surrounding the relationship with the lost parent. There is a lack of gratitude for any gifts, favours, etc.. This lack of guilt cannot be attributed solely to cognitive immaturity but is related to the brainwashing done by the alienating parent.

NORSK:Fravær av skyld: Barna uttrykker ikke noen følelser av skyld om omstendighetene rundt forholdet til den tapte forelder. Det er en mangel på takknemlighet for gaver, tjenester, etc.. Denne mangelen på skyld ikke kan tilskrives utelukkende til kognitiv umodenhet, men er relatert til

hjernevasking gjort av fiendtliggjørende forelder.

7. **Borrowed scenarios:** The children use language and expressions that are clearly not their own. The quality with which they express their beliefs appears to be coached and rehearsed, and the only source of the borrowed scenarios appears to be the alienating parent. For instance, a five year old borrows the alienating mother's words and say "Daddy's new girlfriend is a whore!".

NORSK: **Lånte scenarier:** Barna bruker språk og uttrykk som er helt klart ikke er deres egne. Kvaliteten som de uttrykker sin tro ser ut til å bli coachet og øvde, og den eneste kilden til de lånte scenarier synes å være den fiendtliggjørende forelder. For eksempel låner en fem år gammel fremmedgjørende morens ord og si "*pappas nye kjæreste er en hore!*".

8. **Generalization of animosity:** The lost parent's extended family is also included in the animosity. These individuals are also perceived as encompassing negative qualities or inappropriate actions since they are associated with the lost parent. For instance, any attempt by the extended family to counter the denigration of the lost parent is viewed by the children as an attack on their beliefs that they must defend.

NORSK: **Generalisering av fiendskap:** Den tapte foreldrenes utvidede familie er også inkludert i fiendskap. Disse personene er også oppfattet som med negative egenskaper eller upassende handlinger siden de er knyttet til den tapte forelder. For eksempel er ethvert forsøk fra storfamilien for å motvirke nedvurdering av den tapte overordnede sett av barna som et angrep på deres tro som de må forsvare.

4 trekk etter Bone & Walsh (1999):

1. One parent actively blocks access or contact between the child and the absent parent

NORSK: En av foreldrene aktivt blokkerer tilgang eller kontakt mellom barnet og den fraværende av foreldrene

2. False or unfounded accusations of abuse against the absent parent.

NORSK: Falske eller grunnløse beskyldninger om overgrep mot den fraværende forelderen.

3. A deterioration in the relationship between the children and the absent parent following the parents separation.

NORSK: En forverring i forholdet mellom barn og fraværende foreldre etter foreldrenes separasjon.

4. The children's fear in displeasing or disagreeing with the potentially alienating parent.

NORSK: Barnas frykt i å mishage eller være uenig med potensielt fiendtlig gjørende forelder.

Naive, active and obsessed alienators (Darnell 2008)

NAIVE alienators make negative comments about the other parent but withhold serious intent to undermine the child's relationship with the parent. They support the child's relationship with the other parent.

ACTIVE alienators are more consistent and determined in their alienating behaviors. There is an intentional desire to criticize and undermine the target parent.

OBSESSED alienators are determined to destroy the child's relationship with the targeted parent. Obsessed alienators are extremists. They pressure the child to adopt their own negative view of the targeted parent, put much pressure on the child to empathically reject the targeted parent, and cannot tolerate a good relationship between the child and the targeted parent.

Elisabeth Ellis (2000)

Ellis suggested that the diagnosis of PAS should require that the child or adolescent manifest nine of the following twelve criteria:

1. The child maintain a delusion of being persecuted by a parent.
2. The child use the mechanism of splitting to reduce ambiguity.
3. The child denies any positive feelings for the targeted parent.
4. The attribution of negative qualities to the targeted parent may take on a quality of distortion or bizarreness.
5. The child states "recollections" of events that occurred out of the child's presence.
6. The child's sence of persecution by the targeted parent has the quality of a litany.
7. The child, when faced with contact with the targeted parent, displays a reaction of extreme anxiety.
8. The child has a dependent and enmeshed relationship with the alienating parent.
9. The child is highly cooperative with all adults other than the targeted parent.
10. The child views the alienating parent as a victim.
11. The child maintains a complete lack of concern about the targeted parent.
12. The child's belif system is particularly rigid, fixed, and resist to traditional methods of intervention.

As in most disorders, the severity of PAS can range from mild to severe. [Cartwright \(1993\)](#) noted that the time that is spent alienating the child may be an indicator of the degree to which the

child is alienated; the longer the alienation, the more alienated the child.

In a Severe level of PAS, the alienating parent demonstrates paranoid thoughts that may be limited to the lost parent or may generalize to other circumstances. Prior to the divorce, however, the alienating parent may not have demonstrated any paranoia. Another characteristic includes the alienating parent's obsession with preventing the lost parent from having or exercising any visitation rights. The alienating parent will use any means necessary to ensure this goal. Further, alienating parents project their own negative qualities onto the lost parents, reinforcing their own paranoia and portraying themselves as victims. As a result of this paranoia, alienating parents do not respond with appeals to logic or reason, or even to confrontations with reality. Those who do not support the alienating parents' beliefs, whether they are mental health professionals, lawyers, etc., are believed either to be against them or to be paid by the lost parent. The children in severe cases of PAS share the alienating parent's paranoia about the lost parent. They will refuse to visit the lost parent and often demonstrate panic and hostility that renders visits impossible. Further, if visitation does occur, once they are in the lost parent's home they may run away, become paralyzed with fear, or become destructive to the extent that they must be removed from the home.

The Moderate level of PAS includes alienating parents who exhibit more rage than paranoid tendencies. They are able to make some distinction between a child's preposterous allegations and those which may have some validity. However, as in severe cases, an alienating parent in a moderate case of PAS will also undertake a campaign of denigration against the lost parent and will tend to prevent the lost parent's exercise of visitation rights. Prior to the divorce, the moderate alienating parent is more likely to have been a good child rearer. The children of moderate PAS tend to be less persistent with their campaigns of denigration, and are more likely to abandon them in the presence of the lost parents, especially after long periods of time. In this type of case campaigns of denigration by younger children in the presence of their lost parents can only be sustained with the help of older siblings who function as surrogate parents during visitation. The alienated children's primary motives for maintaining campaigns of denigration are to maintain "healthy" psychological bonds with the

alienating parents.

The Mild level of PAS, the parents have generally healthy psychological bonds with their children. They respond to logic and reason in that they recognize that the alienation of the non-custodial parent is not beneficial for the children. Therefore, the alienating parent will be willing to take a conciliatory approach towards the lost parent's requests. [Gardner \(1992\)](#) also notes that mild cases of PAS require considerably less therapy than the more severe cases. Further, the children may become healthier when the intervention simply requires the child to remain in the presence of the lost parent over time.

Baker, A.J.L. (2007) found an interesting pattern:

1. Narcissistic mothers in divorced families alienated children from their fathers
2. Narcissistic mothers in intact families alienated the children from their fathers
3. Cold, rejecting or abusive alienating parents of either gender – in intact or divorced families – alienating the children from the targeted parent

Gordon found that PAS parents more often used primitive defense mechanisms such as splitting and projective identification than normal parents. PAS main feature is the child's rejection of the normal parent as a result of brainwashing from PAS parent and the child's own participation. PAS is child abuse and the effect continues into adulthood. Research has shown that PAS parents often have personality disorders, and the PAS is a function of a parents disturbed relationship to the child. Narcissistic disorder among PAS parent is widespread.

A normal parent's complaint is different from a PAS parent's accusation. Normal parents do not see the relationship with the other as black / white, they tolerate errors and discrepancies. Parents with primitive defenses have difficulty with perception and negotiate realistically. Typically defense is splitting, denial and

projective identification. Neurotic defenses are less disturbed reality.

PAS parents damage their children's judgment by others on the basis of objectivity. They teach children to consider others as either good or bad, and acceptance to treat others unfairly, children's ability of healthy intimacy is destroyed. The child's rejection of the other parent has no basis in the other parent.

Primitive psychological defenses are PAS 's main factor, not gender. Ex. a PAS parent and child projects their own irrational aggression on the normal parent whereupon they claim it is the normal parent who has an aggression problem. Primitive defense helps the child keep a pathological symbiosis with the idealized PAS parent. Projective identification is used to blame and provoke the normal parent.

NORSK:

Gordon fant at PAS foreldre oftere brukte primitive forsvars-mekanismer som splitting og projektiv identifikasjon enn normale foreldre. PAS fremste trekk er barnets avvisning av den normale forelder som et resultat av hjernevask fra PAS forelder og barnets egen deltagelse. PAS er overgrep mot barn hvis effekt fortsetter inn i voksen alder. Forskning har vist at PAS foreldre ofte har personlighetsforstyrrelser og at PAS er en funksjon av en forstyrret forelders forhold til barnet. Narsissistisk forstyrrelse blant PAS foreldre er utbredt.

En normal forelders anklage er forskjellig fra en PAS forelders anklage. Normale foreldre ser ikke forholdet med den andre som svart/hvit, de tolererer feil og avvik. Foreldre med primitive forsvar har vansker med persepsjon og forhandle realistisk. Typisk forsvar er splitting, benektelse og projektiv identifikasjon. Nevrotisk forsvar er mindre virkelighetsforstyrret.

PAS foreldre skader barnas vurderingsevne av andre ut ifra objektivitet. De lærer barna å vurdere andre som enten gode eller dårlige, og aksept for å behandle andre urettferdig, barnas evne til sunn intimitet blir ødelagt. Barnets avvisning av den andre forelder har ikke grunnlag i den andre forelder.

Primitivt psykologisk forsvar er PAS 's hovedfaktor, ikke kjønn. Eks.

et PAS forelder og barnet projiserer egen irrasjonelle aggresjon over på den normale forelder hvorpå de påstår det er den normale forelder som har et aggresjonsproblem. Primitivt forsvar hjelper barnet beholde en patologisk symbiose med den idealiserte PAS forelder. Projektiv identifikasjon brukes til å klandre og provosere den normale forelder.

	Label	Definition and Criteria	Level	Focus
Gardner (2004a)	Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS)	It is a disorder in which children, programed by the alienating parent, embark upon a campaign of denigration against the alienated parent. PAS recognizance depends on the child's behavior. There are eight diagnostic criteria: (1) a child's unjustified campaign of denigration toward the alienated parent. (2) The child uses weak, frivolous, or absurd rationalizations for deprecating a parent; (3) Lack of ambivalence; (4) The "independent-thinker" phenomenon; (5) Reflexive support of the alienating parent in parental conflict; (6) The child has an absence of guilt over cruelty to and/or exploitation of the alienated parent; (7) Presence of borrowed scenarios; (8) Spread of animosity to the extended family and friends of the alienated parent.	Three clinical levels: 1. Mild. 2. Moderate. 3. Severe.	Child
Kelly & Johnston (2001)	Alienated child	"An <i>alienated child</i> is defined as one who expresses – freely and persistently unreasonable negative feelings and beliefs ... towards a parent that are significantly disproportionate to the child's actual experience with the parent" (Kelly & Johnston, 2001, p. 251). Authors propose a concentric model, the central element of which is the child's emotional and behavioral response. There are background factors that directly or indirectly affect the child and included history of intense marital conflict in which the child was triangulated; a humiliating separation; highly conflictual divorce and litigation; aligned professionals; extended families; new partners; the personality of each parent; age; cognitive capacity; and the temperament of the child.	Children's relationships to each parent after divorce can be conceptualized along a continuum of positive to negative: <i>positive relationships with both parents; affinity</i> toward one parent; <i>alliance</i> with one parent; <i>estranged children</i> from one parent; <i>to child alienation</i>.	Family
Friedlander and Walters (2010)	Families with an alienated child	Kelly and Johnston define the relationships patterns: (1) estrangement: "refers to impairment in the parent-child relationship as a result of realistic problems brought to the relationship by the rejected or resisted parents" (Friedlander & Walters, 2010, p. 109); (2) enmeshment: "refers to a relationships in which the psychological boundaries between the parent and child are blurred	Authors redefine. Johnston and Kelly (2001) classification from <i>alignment</i> (affinity and alliance), <i>alienation</i>, <i>enmeshment</i>, <i>hybrid cases</i> (e.g., enmeshment and alienation, enmeshment	Family

		and their identities are merged” (Friedlander & Walters, 2010, p. 109). Hybrid cases include the child’s exposure to Parent A’s denigration of Parent B, the child’s direct experience of Parent B’s real caregiving deficits and the child’s enmeshed and inappropriate relationship within the aligned dyad.	and estrangement), <i>estrangement to neglect and/or abuse</i> by rejected parent.
Warshal (2002)	Parental Alienation (PA)	Three components must be present for a correct diagnosis: (1) the persistent rejection of a parent which reaches the level of a campaign; (2) an unjustified or irrational rejection by the child; (3) rejection by a child that is a partial result of the alienating parent’s influences. Other critical aspects are: (1) a change from a previously good relationship; (2) the possibility that the aversion may also be applied to others and not only to parents. More recently, the author retracted the term “pathological alienation” because it casts a family problem as a medical model.	Author used Otis’s conceptualizations (Otis, 2007, cited in Warshak, 2010) of disrupted relationships: from <i>disillusioned and alienated</i> to <i>estranged</i> . Within each category, children vary in the degree to which their aversion toward their parent is realistic/reasonable versus unrealistic/unreasonable.

Kilder:

Despina Vassiliou 1998, Parental alienation syndrome: The lost parents’ perspective

Bernet, W. (2010) Parent Alienation DSM–5 and ICD–11

ROBERT M. GORDON 2008 : MMPI–2 Findings of Primitive Defenses in Alienating Parents

Lavadera & al. (2012) Parental Alienation Syndrome in Italian legal judgments: An exploratory study