

Hello, my name is Rune Fardal, I live in Norway, I study psychology with a focus on narcissistic personality disorders. In 2006 I wrote a book on psychopaths and is currently working on a new book about narcissists.

Today I like to focus on, the *Parent alienation syndrome, PAS*, and I raise the question if this is a separate disorder or if this, in line with the principle of Occam's razor is a behavior, that could better be explained by the narcissistic personality disorder?

We know with certainty that this behavior mainly takes place in divorce and separation. We know that the prevalence of narcissistic issues is high in PAS parents. In the vast majority of such cases it is the mother that affects the child to reject his/her father, even though some fathers also have such behavior.

Perhaps one should start looking at PAS as a behavior typical of *narcissistic disturbed personalities*, rather than being a separate disorder. There is no doubt that this is a behavior that is triggered when a specific threat of separation occurs. While in some cases one parent can put the child up against the other while in a relationship, it is first during divorce that this behavior to the fullest appears.

The core of PAS is that one parent, usually the mother, affects the child to reject or fear the father, without something in the relationship between father and child that would warrant such behavior from the child. While the parents are living together, one sees that the child rarely develops aversion to one parent and preference for the other as in PAS.

This behavior from the child happens after divorce and it increases in strength as time go. It does not decrease until the child is moved to the alienated parent. this suggests that the mother's presence is a necessary factor for PAS to occur. It is obvious that the child is adversely affected and that it is experiencing attacks on its relationship with his father. Although we often see mothers, clearly denies that she has affected the child negatively, there is no doubt that they have done so. A normal child does not make up these unsupported claims by its own.

Likewise, it is typical that the child denies that the mother have affected it ,for such negativity towards its father. Both seem almost unanimous arguing this is the child's own decision. Contrary to a child's biology, it does not cancel contact with one caregiver.

In a setting where both mother and the child alleges that the mother has no responsibility, one finds it strange that, the mother can not give examples to what she has done in order for the child to maintain its visitation with its father.

Equally elusive is the answer when you ask these children what is the reason they will not see their father and why they suddenly become so negative to meet him. The father they in the relationship most often adored!

There is something wrong with such children that, on one side is very clear that they do not want to visit their father, but on the other side, can not provide any clear answer to the cause of this aversion. It is obvious that they protect the mother. They are brainwashed and manipulated. And changing a child's memory has been shown to be a simple case in scientific studies.

Similarly, there is very little mother has done to get the child on visitation when this interaction ceases. Most often, the mother can not describe any effort to improve such a visitation. Some times they can claim they have tried to ask others to help, but they themselves have little to show for.

On the contrary such mothers project responsibility on to the child to keep contact with its father. Mother disclaims responsibility, the child assigned responsibility. This alone is a clear example of an adult failing its responsibilities.

Further, one may in some cases see that a certain ambivalence shines through in such children. They can express that the father did not want anything to do with them, while documented beyond any doubt, the father has done everything possible to bring about such contact.

In many cases, there are indications that the child has a longing for their father, expressed as an accusation against the father that he "*does not care*" "does not make contact" with the child, even though the opposite is clearly documented. Again, the voice we hear is the mothers.

Often these conflicts escalates when the professionals with no knowledge of PAS take the child and mother's statement at *face value* and without further knowledge assume these statements to be true :

Child: *I will not visit my father! I hate him!*

Mother: *I have done everything to make visitation possible!*

Hate - statements like this from a child is not a vocabulary one expects from a child. This is a projection from the mother, forwarded by the child. It's the child's strategy for surviving in an environment hostile to its father. It's a sort of Stockholm syndrome where the child reflects the mother's voice in order to avoid being a victim of her aggression.

Based on these statements some psychologists, social workers and judges reason that there must be "*something*" negative in the relationship between child and father for such aversion to occur.

They hear the mother has made a "*wholehearted commitment*" without that having helped. Further it appears that the child is very clear in its aversion to contact its father. And today children shall be heard the older they get. The problem is, it's not the child's words that the voice is carrying. The problem is that such an aversion is never given a real reason! The child's voice is the echo of the mother, they are brainwashed.

It is only when one has knowledge of *narcissistic dynamics*, and knowledge of the psychology of attachment, that one may realize that things are not what they seem.

Typical of narcissists is that they need a narcissistic supply. At the same time, their basic problem is *shame*. The fear of being alone, loss experience, the fear of what the environment says if the child lives with the father, activate in my opinion PAS dynamics.

Jealousy and revenge are two other typical features of narcissistic issues. A parent who kills the child in order to hurt the other parent, are described in the news almost weekly from all over the world. It's the narcissist's ultimate revenge, at the same time documenting the total absence of empathy in such a parent.

By preventing contact with the father, the mother has her need for revenge satisfied. Narcissists lack empathy and don't care about how this affects the child. On the contrary, they use the child by manipulating it in more or less subtle ways to take it away from the father.

These mothers play the victim role and get the child to pity them, the child must “protect the mother”. Such expectations, binds the child in an unhealthy dependency to a disturbed mother.

Seen from a narcissistic view, PAS does not appear as a separate personality disorder, but as a behavior especially narcissists adopt when they are in danger of being abandoned. So instead of saying PAS parents may show narcissistic traits, one should say narcissists use alienation as a defence for loss and the need for revenge.

There is a criterion of a *personality disorder* that it should permeate the person in many different settings over a longer period of time. The behavior seen in “Parental alienation syndrome” seems to be traits that becomes apparent in a given situation and thus an expression of narcissistic disorder, rather than as a separate disorder.

One must remember that in order for this behavior to take place one needs a personality whose traits are similar to the narcissist. The underlying structures that lead to this behavior is typical narcissistic traits. PAS, and its underlying dynamics is about the adult's needs and behavior. The child is just a tool for this.

A child who lives alone with a parent, where the other parent is dead or not existing in the child's life, never develops PAS! This shows that you need a disturbed parent in order to create such a behavior in a child. And research has shown that removing such a child to its alienated parent, reduces this behavior in a child.

It's a narcissistic parent's fear of loss and need for revenge that enable PAS, not the other way around. Because a normal parent with empathy would not expose a child to this behavior.

DSM 5 has a description of Narcissistic personality disorder and both the overt and the covert type of narcissists are capable of this alienating behavior.

Thank you

