

My Psychology Abstract on Parental Alienation Syndrome

4. juli 2013 kl. 02:16

9/20/11
A

PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME

Parental Alienation Syndrome

Nathan Jones

San Antonio College

PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME

Parental Alienation Syndrome

Amy J. L. Baker, Ph.D. is a nationally recognized psychologist and expert in parent-child relationships, especially children of divorce, parental alienation syndrome, and emotional abuse of children. She is currently the Director of Research at the Vincent J. Fontana Center for Child Protection in New York City. She also held positions as the Senior Research Director at the New York Foundling Hospital in New York City and the Director at the Center for Child Welfare Research in Dobbs Ferry, New York. Dr. Baker is one of the nation's foremost experts in the research of Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS). She has been called for expert testimony in cases in Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Wyoming as well as Ontario, Canada.

“The parental alienation syndrome (PAS) is a disorder that arises primarily in the context of child-custody disputes. Its primary manifestation is the child's campaign of denigration against the parent, a campaign that has no justification. The disorder results from the combination of indoctrinations by the alienating parent and the child's own contributions to the vilification of the alienated parent.” – Richard A. Gardner, Ph.D. (The first mention of PAS in 1985)

It is estimated that approximately 20 million American children will fall victim to Parental Alienation Syndrome in one form or another with most cases ranging and labeled mild, moderate or severe. Another 25 million American children will likely face some form of parental alienation between

the time of their parents' divorce and adulthood.

Although no professional association has recognized PAS as a relevant medical syndrome or mental disorder, and it is not listed in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* or the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems of the WHO, there are psychological and personality disorders that lead to PAS. In Dr. Baker's study of 38 families that met the criteria of PAS, she found three major patterns which were found to be a core cause leading to the alienation. These three patterns were: Narcissistic Mother in Divorced Family, Narcissistic Mother In-Tact Family, and Rejecting/Abusive Alienating Parent.

The first pattern (Narcissistic Mother in Divorced Family) involved divorced families where the mother maintained sole custody of the children. The mother in these cases appeared to have a narcissistic personality disorder with the characteristics of grandiosity, extreme self-involvement, and a lack of interest or empathy for others. These mothers appeared to be preoccupied with their own self-interests rather than the needs of the children involved.

Some common remarks among the grown children participating in the study in this pattern spoke of their mothers, "I'm a mama's boy," or "It was fabulous. I was her daughter. I didn't individuate from her. I did everything for her to make her life better." Also, "We were really good friends. It was brilliant. I used to be called her shadow because we'd do everything together." The alienating mothers in these families were regarded and portrayed as charming and that their actions were driven to serve their mother's need of love and affection and not the health and growth of the children. These mothers, may have fueled the alienation of the fathers because narcissists tend to feel empty inside and tend to project a powerful personality to the world and when they feel abandoned or

humiliated by their divorces will take their rages out on their former spouses. In many cases these narcissistic mothers “avoid, deny, and/or devalue the offending stimulus or perception, thereby restoring the balance of his or her narcissistic equilibrium.”

Another common theme among this pattern group was the mother’s degeneration of the father with the child’s beliefs mimicking the alienating parent. A common thought process for the children were that the father no longer loved them and that they were moving on with their lives with new families or that the father was simply a bad person.

The second pattern group (Mother In-Tact Family) is much like the first with the only difference being that it was not in the context of a post-divorce and the family remained together; the alienation style was also different. In this pattern the mother would confide in the children with the father’s inadequacies and would amplify the father’s failures. The mothers in these cases would systematically solidify their relationship with the children and would build on the children’s confidence and trust in the mother meanwhile damaging the relationship with the targeted parent by provoking empathy for the mother and an unrealistic bias against the father.

Common comments among the adult children of these situations were, “She was never satisfied with what my father could provide. He worked 12 hours a day. She was complaining about everything he did, in front of the children, and to other people.” Another impression was, it was “Almost like an us-against-him kind of thing. Treating me more like a peer or a friend than a child in the household.”

Lastly, the third pattern group (Rejecting/Abusive Alienating Parent) is

drastically different than the first two, most noticeably in the difference in the relationship between the child and the alienating parent. In the first two patterns, the alienating parent did their campaigning through seduction, charm and persuasion, but in this pattern they used tactics of violence, fear, pain and denigration.

This alienation pattern is the most extreme of all, with the adult children recounting very violent, controlling parents who they felt safer aligning themselves with the alienating parent against the target parent. The most serious account was the alienating parent forcing the child into an incestuous relationship with the target parent as a means of destroying the relationship. Many of the accounts of this pattern involved substance abuse.

Although each of these patterns range in severity, the goal is the same: to alienate one parent from the children involved, while gaining favor and an advantage with them.

References

Baker, A.J.L. (2007). *Adult children of parental alienation syndrome: Breaking the ties that bind*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Gardner, Richard A., M.D. "Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS): Sixteen Years Later." The American Academy of Psychoanalysis. Academy Forum, 2001.