

# Happy Parenting - Malta (For Happier Children)

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# Happy Parenting - Malta (For Happier Children)



ANTHONY CAUCHI

HAPPY PARENTING - MALTA (FOR HAPPIER CHILDREN)



# 4 Pillars to alleviate Parental Alienation

- Awareness
- Education
- Intervention
- Cohesion



# What is Parental Alienation?

A child - usually one whose parents are engaged in a separation or divorce - allies strongly with one parent (the preferred parent) and rejects a relationship with the other parent (the alienated parent) without legitimate justification.



# Dr. Amy Baker - The Dangers of Parental Alienation

The Targeted Parent and others must make the child feel

**Safe, Loved** and be **Available.**

The opposite feelings from their Alienating Parent, of Child feelings being

**Afraid, Unloved** and **Unavailable.**





# Is it Parental Alienation?

According to research, **ALL** of the following **4 factors must be present** in order for parental alienation to exist:

- 1 A prior positive relationship between the child and the now rejected parent
- 2 Absence of maltreatment by the rejected parent
- 3 Use of alienating behaviours by the favoured parent
- 4 Presence of behavioural manifestations of alienation in the child

When one or no factors are present, it is **NOT** alienation

*(Baker, 2020)*



[www.parentalalienationuk.info](http://www.parentalalienationuk.info)

#protectingchildrenmatters



Contradictory Statements	Inappropriate & Unnecessary Information	Character Assault	Collusion or One-Sided Alliance	Child Becomes Spy or Conduit of Information
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# PARENTAL ALIENATION

Use of Indirect Statements	Restrictions on Permission to Love or Be Loved	Unchildlike Statements	Good Parent versus Bad Parent	Comparative Martyr Role
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Fear of Contact with the Other Parent	Anxiety Arousal	Cohort in Secret-Keeping	Child Appears as Mirror-Image of Programmer	Confusion of a Birth Parent's Importance
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## List of Detection Factors of Brainwashed Children

Manifestation of Guilt	Scripted Views	Unmanageability for No Apparent Reason	Radical Changes & Dysfunctional Behavior Manifested in Other Spheres	Nonverbal Messages
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Reference: Stanley Clawar and Brynne Rivlin (2013) Children Held Hostage: Identifying Brainwashed Children, Presenting a Case, and Crafting Solutions. ABA Publishing.

Coaching Behavior	Brain Twirling	Child Threatens Parent	Child as Parent's Best Friend	Physical Survival
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Artwork by Amanda Sillars

emmm.org.au



## **Parental Alienation – The Five Factor Model**

Parental alienation (PA) has been documented and discussed in the social, legal and mental health literature for over 100 years now.

This has resulted in confusion and disagreement among practitioners, clinicians and academics regarding what PA is and what PA looks like.

The five-factor model provides us with one consistent and coherent evidence-based model to conceptualise and understand the presence and indicators of parental alienation dynamics in a family at a given moment in time.

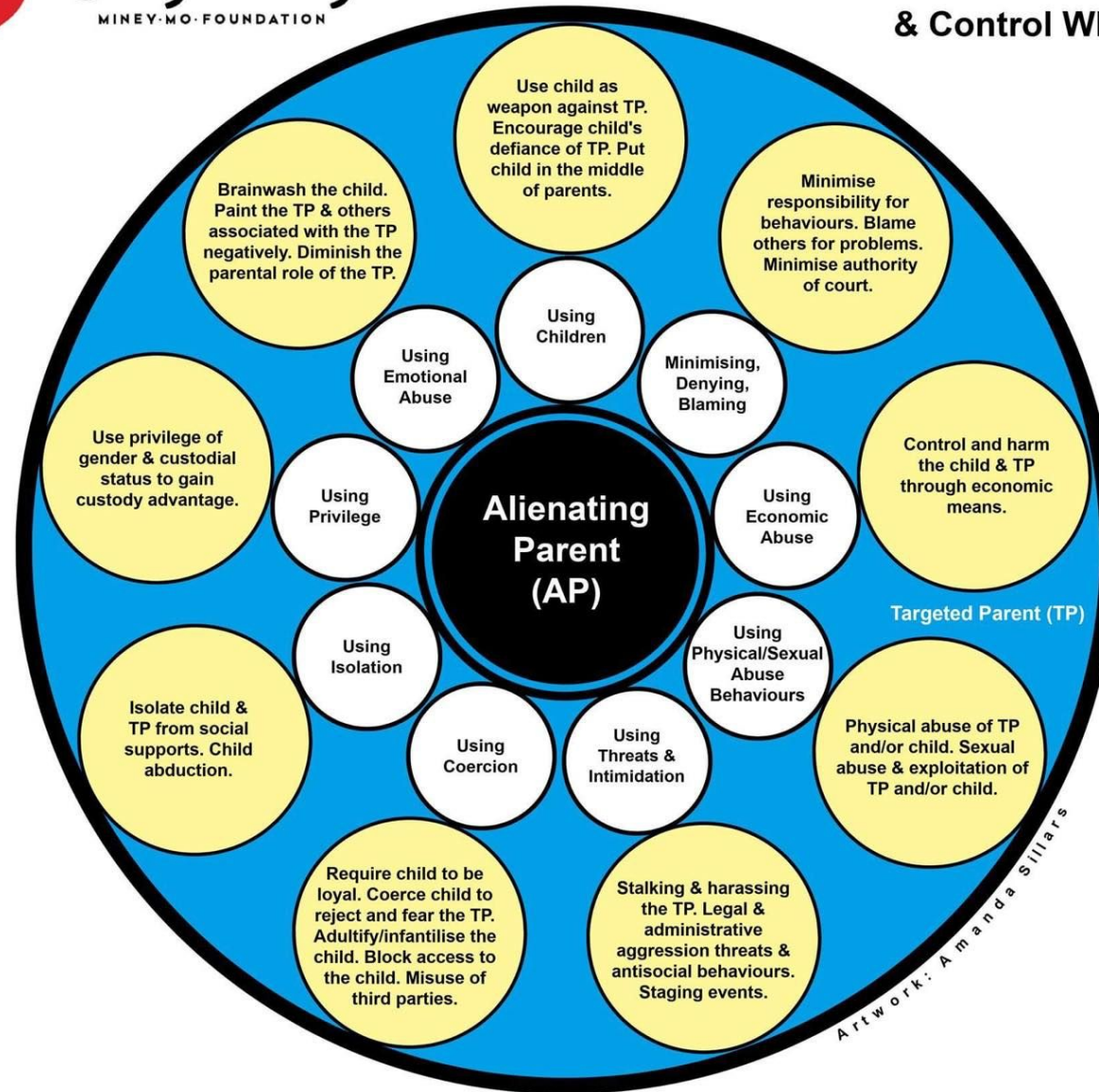
More importantly, it helps us to differentiate between PA and true estrangement thus, privileging the welfare and safety of children and young people.

The five-factor model presents an opportunity for professionals across the social, legal and mental health professions to achieve clarity regarding what parental alienation is and what it looks like in a simple and straight forward evidence-based manner. It provides us with a common framework to inform our practice with families and young people.

- 1. Contact refusal.**
- 2. Positive relationship prior to contact refusal.**
- 3. Absence of abuse or neglect on the part of the alienated parent.**
- 4. Alienating behaviours of the preferred parent.**
- 5. Child manifesting symptoms of Parental Alienation.**







Adapted from:  
 Harman, J. J., & Matthewson, M. (2020). Parental alienating behaviors. In D. Lorandos and W. Bernet (Eds.), *Parental Alienation - Science and Law*, pp. 82-141. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas Publisher.

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## 17 Parental Alienation Strategies

Beyond the High Road: Responding to 17 Parental Alienation Strategies without Compromising Your Morals or Harming Your Child. Amy Baker & Paul Fine, May 2008

**Strategy 1:** Badmouthing

**Strategy 2:** Limiting Contact

**Strategy 3:** Interfering with Communication

**Strategy 4:** Interfering with Symbolic Communication

**Strategy 5:** Withdrawal of Love

**Strategy 6:** Telling Child Targeted Parent Does Not Love Him or Her

**Strategy 7:** Forcing Child to Choose

**Strategy 8:** Creating the Impression that the Targeted Parent is Dangerous

**Strategy 9:** Confiding in Child

**Strategy 10:** Forcing Child to Reject Targeted Parent

**Strategy 11:** Asking Child to Spy on Targeted Parent

**Strategy 12:** Asking Child to Keep Secrets from Targeted Parent

**Strategy 13:** Referring to Targeted Parent by First Name

**Strategy 14:** Referring to a Stepparent as "Mom" or "Dad" and Encouraging Child to Do the Same

**Strategy 15:** Withholding Medical, Academic, and Other Important Information from Targeted Parent/ Keeping Targeted Parent's Name off of Medical, Academic, and Other Relevant Documents

**Strategy 16:** Changing Child's Name to Remove Association with Targeted Parent

**Strategy 17:** Cultivating Dependency



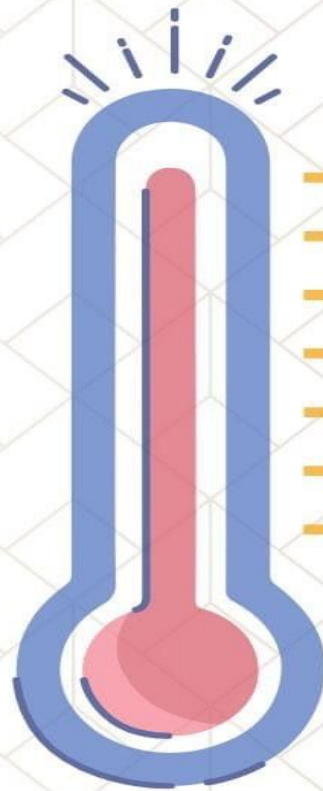
The first step to putting a stop to parental alienation is learning how to read the signs. If you fear your child has become the victim of parental alienation, working with a family counselor or family law attorney can help you determine your next steps.

1. **A campaign of denigration** - In a denigration campaign, the relationship between the alienated parent and the child will shift seemingly overnight. While there was once a positive relationship, the child now shows constant hostility or unfairly criticizes the targeted parent.
2. **Weak, frivolous and absurd rationalizations** - When confronted about why the child feels negatively towards the alienated parent, they cannot justify their feelings with specific examples or their reasons are wildly untrue. Sometimes, the child rejects the parent for reasons that wouldn't usually rationalize rejection, such as their parent's appearance or food preparation skills.
3. **A lack of ambivalence** - A child suffering from PAS will see no redeeming qualities in the alienated parent. In their eyes, the parent who is doing the alienating can do no wrong, but their feelings towards the alienated parent are wholly negative and critical.
4. **The "independent thinker" phenomenon** - Even though the alienating parent has brainwashed the child to hate or fear the alienated parent, the child will insist that their reasons for this hatred are their own. The child will deny that any ideas came from the alienating parent.
5. **An absence of guilt** - Children with PAS typically don't experience feelings of guilt for their harsh treatment of the alienated parent. In most cases, they will act ungrateful, spiteful or cold toward the alienated parent and appear unimpressed by any gifts or favors offered by the targeted parent.
6. **Support for the alienating parent** - No matter the alienating parent's position, the child will always take their side over the targeted parent. The child is unwilling to be impartial or hear out the alienated parent when there are parental disagreements or conflict.
7. **Borrowed phrases and scenarios** - Alienated children will often borrow adult language or ideas from their alienator that they do not appear to understand. The child may also make accusations about events that never happened or that they cannot support with evidence.
8. **Rejection of extended family** - Unfortunately, the resentment an alienated child feels towards the targeted parent can also extend to their relatives. Aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents that were once loved may suddenly be despised and avoided.





# PA Scale of Severity



**SEVERE**

Child refuses all contact b/c of a false belief their parent is "bad"

**MODERATE**

Child stubbornly refuses contact but will re-engage once alienating parent is absent

**MILD**

Child refuses contact but enjoys it when contact is made

(Harman et al., 2019)





## What alienated children say?

- “Mum used the F word when the bath overflowed”, “She puts me on the bold step for 2-4 minutes when I break the rules”
- “I want to be independent and decide for myself when I see my Mum”. “I want to live with my Dad full-time and see my Mum whenever” 7-year-old male
- “Under article 12 of the UN convention of the rights of the child I do not have to see her ever again if I do not want to” (11 y/o female)
- “I have dreams of him strangling me” (10 y/o female)
- “Mum acts funny.....” “cannot describe, you have to see it”
- The voice of the child is simply that a voice, and not a choice
- Parents typically say “What can I do”, “I cannot force him/her to go”, or “he/she refuses to Mum /Dad”.
- If Mary decided she did not want to go to school tomorrow would that be ok?



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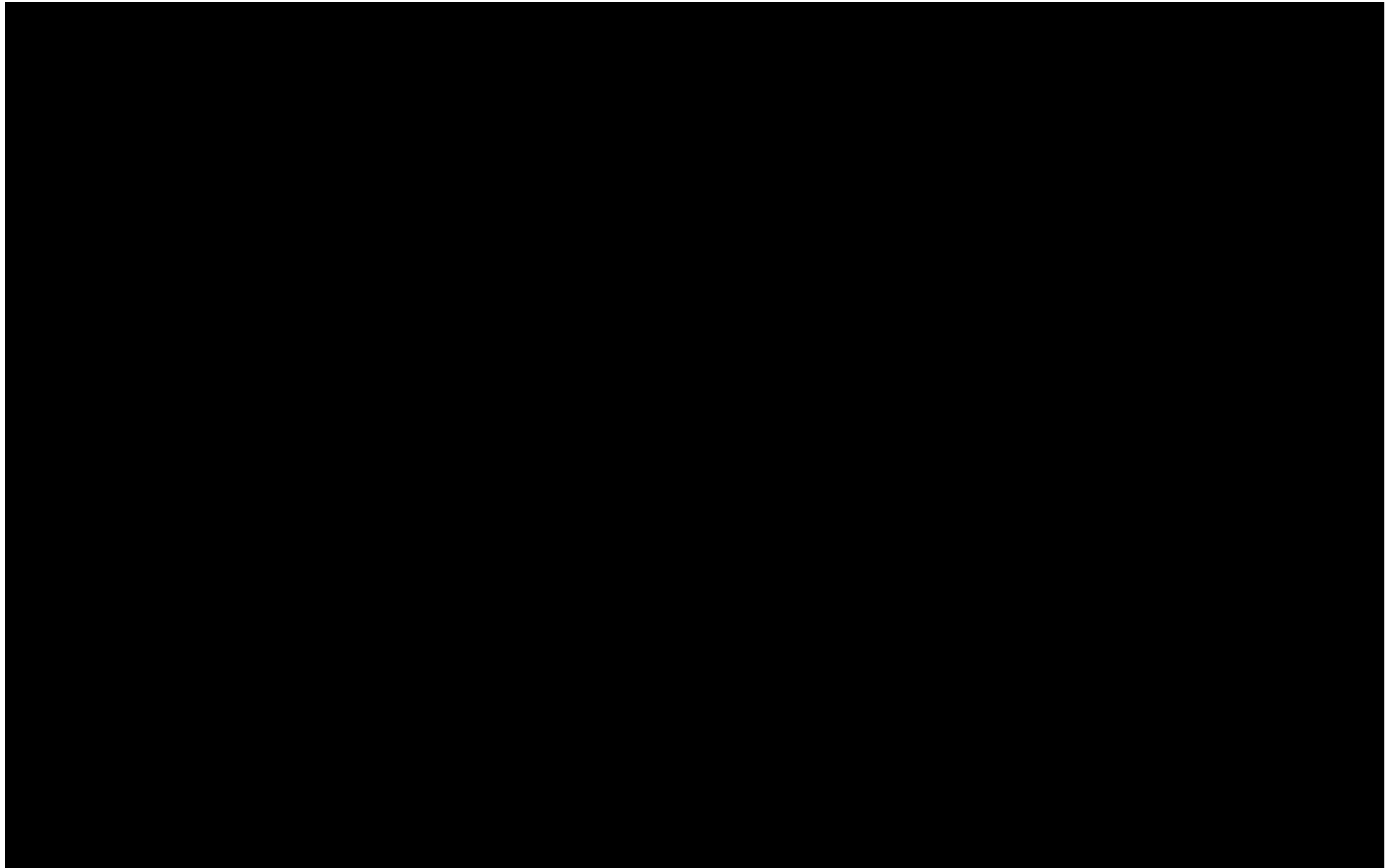
## What are the rates of PA?

- Clawar & Rivlin (1991) found PA to be present in 80% of cases in their study of 700 divorces
- 70 % of cases were identified where there has been false and wrongful allegations of abuse in the context of high conflict divorce & separations (Kay,2014; Brown et al,1998; Faller & De Voe, 1995; Theonnes & Thjaden,1990; Trocme & Bala, 2005; Kopetski, 2006; Rand & Rand, 2006 and Rand 1997a).
- Harman et al (2019) places the occurrence of PA at three times the rate of Autism in the general population



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Estimated Prevalence of Parental Alienation

327,803

Affected By Parental Alienation In Ireland

4,528,821

Affected By Parental Alienation In The United Kingdom



50,066,651

Affected By Parental Alienation On The Continent Of Europe

22,070,757

Affected By Parental Alienation In The United States Of America



*Parental Alienation*

**IS CHILD ABUSE**

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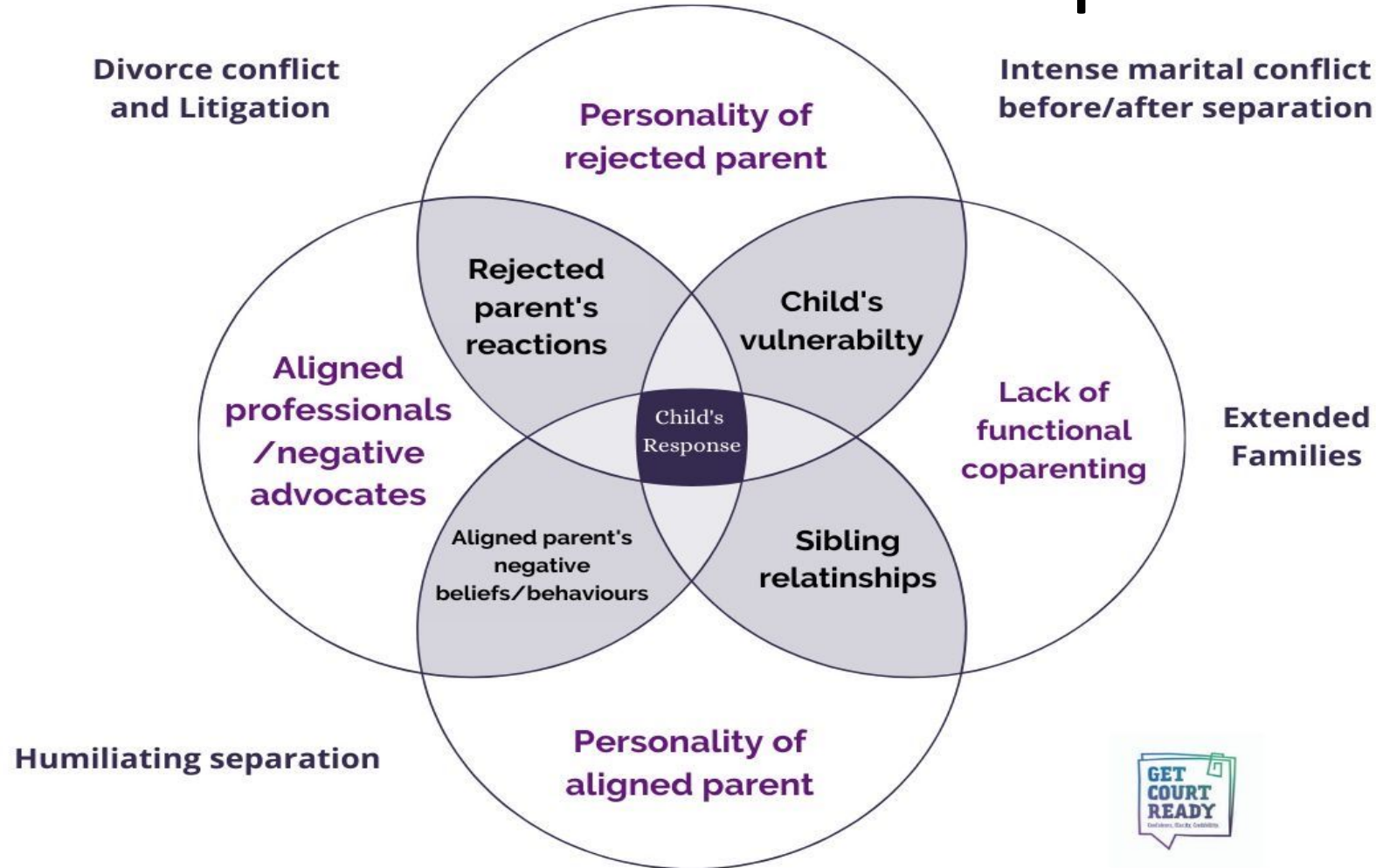


# Local Parliament DV Statistics 2018 - 2020

Snin	Total
<b>2018</b>	<b>479</b>
Astensjoni	7
Hati	16
Hati - Ammenda	1
Hati - Multa	1
Hati - Sentenza Sospiza	1
Hati -Habs	1
Irtirata	5
Liberazzjoni Kondizzjonata	4
Mhux hati	36
Procediment Ezawrit	391
R & A	7
Preskritta	9
<b>2019</b>	<b>352</b>
Hati	2
Hati - Multa	5
Hati - Sentenza Sospiza	2
Irtirata	3
Mhux hati	38
Procediment Ezawrit	293
Preskritta	9
<b>2020</b>	<b>158</b>
Differiti	14
Hati	9
Mhux hati	11
Procediment Ezawrit	118
Preskritta	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>989</b>



# Factors involved in Parent-Child problems



Adapted from Kelly and Johnston (2001)







**It's counterintuitive ...**

**Alienated children, who were never abused, tend to lack ambivalence and hold extremely negative attitudes toward their rejected parents.**

**It's counterintuitive ...**

**Abused children tend to maintain ambivalence toward their abusive parents.**



# Parental Alienation

is a **Mental Health** issue!

- ❑ Narcissistic Personality Disorder
- ❑ Borderline Personality Disorder
- ❑ Antisocial Personality Disorder
- ❑ Sociopathic Personality Disorder
- ❑ Histrionic Personality Disorder
- ❑ Parenting Intrusive/Controlling

**Help raise  
Parental  
& Child  
Alienation  
Awareness**



## A Personality Disorder is Characterological:

An individual with a personality disorder typically presents with **the 4-C's:**

**“Cool Calm Charming Convincing”**

*Steven Miller, MD*

**On the other hand,**

As a result of the alienation, the alienated parent is a trauma victim and *may* present with **the 4-A's:**

**“Angry Agitated Anxious Afraid”**

*Steven Miller, MD*



# Dr. Steve Miller







# Third Party Alienation

- Professional participants fall into “the trap of believing the alienating parent and the programmed child” and make the “egregious mistake of contributing to the problem.”

Reay, K. M. (2015). Family reflections: a promising therapeutic program designed to treat severely alienated children and their family system. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 43, 197–207. Pages 199-200.







## Prevalence of Third Party Alienation

- 2013-2020 ~ 185 total cases from 42 different states (USA)
  - **78% ~ Third Party Alienators**
  - 59% ~ Alienating Mothers / Target Fathers
  - 39% ~ Alienating Fathers / Target mothers
  - 2% ~ Hybrid cases



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# Perverse Family Drama Triangle

**Alienating Parent**  
**RESCUER/PERSECUTOR**

**Therapist**  
(RESCUER)

**CPS Worker**  
(RESCUER)

**Medical Doctor**  
(RESCUER)

**Magistrate**  
(RESCUER)

**Alienated Child**  
**VICTIM**

**Guardian ad litem**  
(RESCUER)

**Police Officer**  
(RESCUER)

**Custody Evaluator**  
(RESCUER)

**Judge**  
(RESCUER)



**Target Parent**  
**VILLAIN**

Haley, J. (1973). Toward a theory of pathological systems. In Gerald H. Zuk and Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy (Eds.), *Family Therapy and Disturbed Families* (pp. 11-27). Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books, Inc. Pages 16 & 17.

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# What Should We Do About It?

## ➤ Know What The Science Says About:

- How false narrative scripts manufactured within an alienating parent-child relationship can peregrinate to include a third party alienator
- How false narrative scripts can be induced through court ordered therapy
- What happens to alienated children when they are exposed to false abuse narratives by professional participants



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# What Should We Do about It?

## ➤ Court orders that:

- Allow broad discovery to include mental health records
- Protect the children from the risk of emotional harm from false abuse scenarios
- Therapeutic interventions that (1) treat the family as the client, (2) engage all members of the family, (3) de-triangulate any victim-villain-rescuer triangles.



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# Child Maltreatment

CM can be broadly defined as any act of commission or omission by a person in a position of power, trust or responsibility (which may include caregivers, strangers as well as other children) that results in harm, and can be either intentional or unintentional. CM is traditionally categorised as physical abuse (PA) (including fabricated induced illness), emotional or psychological abuse (EA), sexual abuse (SA), and neglect. Other forms of abuse have also been recently recognised including female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation and trafficking, child labour, parental alienation, human trafficking, prostitution, cyber grooming, et cetera.

**Mandatory Reporting Guidelines - FOR PROFESSIONALS IN  
TERMS OF THE MINOR PROTECTION (ALTERNATIVE CARE)  
ACT, CAP. 602 OF THE LAWS OF MALTA**



# Vicarious Abuse

This type of abuse is characterized by the intention of harming another person through the child.

Whilst the intention is usually not to directly harm the child, there are instances where an adult may use the child as an instrument to harm another person, therefore subjecting the minor to a highly negative experience and/or certain risks.

Vicarious abuse is most commonly associated to parental alienation contexts, whereby a custodial parent engages in a steady strategy of derogation towards the non-custodial parent with the express intent of hurting.

Whilst the insults or the harm are not performed directly upon the non-custodial parent, the custodial parent advertedly or inadvertedly, induces stressful and negative ideas against the non-custodial parent with the intent that the child develops an antipathy towards the non-custodial parent.

When there is severe vicarious abuse, the child reaches a stage where the child rejects the non-custodial parent and harbours unjustifiable negative emotions towards that parent.

**Mandatory Reporting Guidelines - FOR PROFESSIONALS IN  
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ACT, CAP. 602 OF THE LAWS OF MALTA**



# Parental Alienation overview



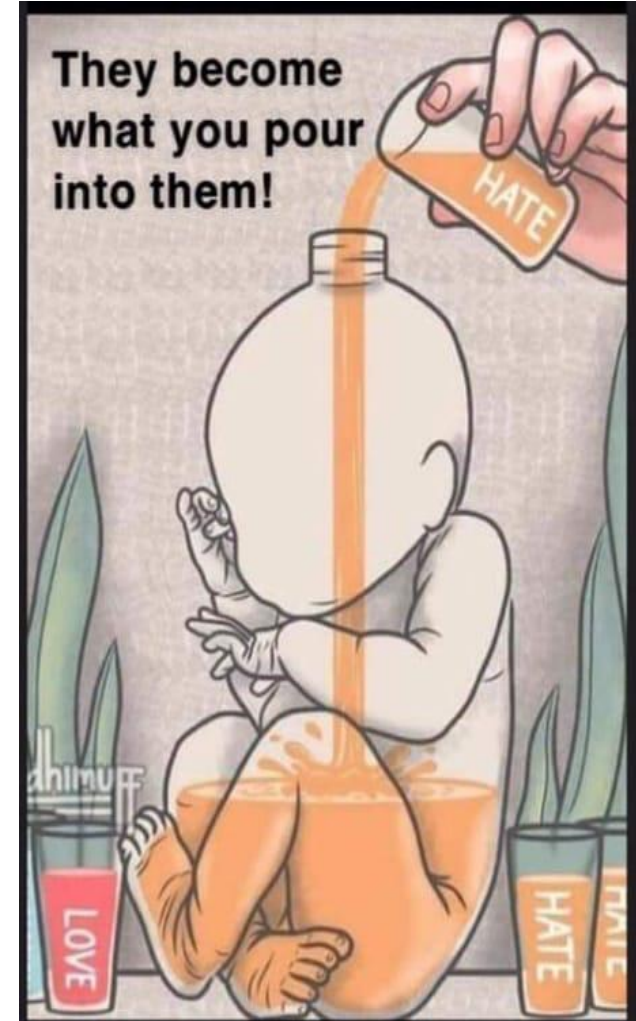


*This is one of the most powerful image I've ever seen. study it & clean up your act for the sake of your children. Their minds are fragile, their emotions run deep. Don't destroy them mentally because words. You can never take back.*

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**Misunderstanding** between **husband** and **wife** affects the **mental health** of **child**.  
This is a **strong message** for society.  
Please keep in mind.

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**“If you don’t encourage the child to have a relationship with the other parent, you’re a bad parent or a bad grandparent.**



**You can either encourage it or discourage it.”**

**Judge Jude - 3/10/2015**

# Parental Alienation Science & Law books

- **Parental Alienation - Science and Law.**   
Demosthenes Lorandos and William Bernet (2020)
- **Understanding and Managing Parental Alienation**   
Janet Haines, Mandy Matthewson and Marcus Turnbull (2020)
- **Litigating Parental Alienation: Evaluating and Presenting an Effective Case in Court**   
Ashish S Joshi (2021)
- **The High-Conflict Custody Battle: Protect Yourself and Your Kids from a Toxic Divorce, False Accusations, and Parental Alienation**  
Amy JL Baker and J.Michael Bone and Brian Ludmer





Children need love from both parents whether they are living together or in separate homes.



[TIMETOPUTKIDSFIRST.ORG](http://TIMETOPUTKIDSFIRST.ORG)



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