

# Diagnosis

---

Diagnostic Indicators of Pathogenic Parenting

Three diagnostic indicators of AB-PA  
(attachment-based "parental alienation"):

- 1.) **Attachment System Suppression:** Termination of the child's attachment bonding motivations toward a normal-range and affectionally available parent.
- 2.) **Narcissistic Personality Traits:** Five specific narcissistic traits in the child's symptom display.
- 3.) **Persecutory Delusion:** The child maintains a fixed and false belief (delusion) of supposed "victimization" by the normal-range parenting of the targeted parent.



# AB-PA: Diagnostic Indicator 3

---

## 3.) Persecutory Delusion

The child evidences a fixed and false belief (a delusion) that the child is supposedly being "victimized" by the normal-range parenting of the targeted-rejected parent.

This symptom represents the child being incorporated into a false trauma reenactment narrative of the narcissistic/(borderline) parent that is in the pattern: "abusive parent"/"victimized child"/"protective parent"

Three diagnostic indicators of AB-PA  
(attachment-based "parental alienation"):

- 1.) **Attachment System Suppression:** Pathogenic parenting.
- 2.) **Narcissistic Personality Traits:** Psychological fingerprints of control.
- 3.) **Persecutory Delusion:** The trauma reenactment narrative.



# Diagnostic Checklist for Pathogenic Parenting:

## Diagnostic Checklist for Pathogenic Parenting: Extended Version

C.A. Childress, Psy.D. (2015)

All three of the diagnostic indicators must be present (either 2a OR 2b) for a clinical diagnosis of attachment-based "parental alienation." Sub-threshold clinical presentations can be further evaluated using a "Response to Intervention" trial.

### 1. Attachment System Suppression

Present	Sub-Threshold	Absent	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The child's symptoms evidence a selective and targeted suppression of the normal-range functioning of the child's attachment bonding motivations toward one parent, the targeted-rejected parent, in which the child seeks to entirely terminate a relationship with this parent (i.e., a child-initiated cutoff in the child's relationship with a normal-range and affectionally available parent).

Secondary Criterion: **Normal-Range Parenting:**

yes	no	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The parenting practices of the targeted-rejected parent are assessed to be broadly normal-range, with due consideration given to the wide spectrum of acceptable parenting that is typically displayed in normal-range families. Normal-range parenting includes the legitimate exercise of parental prerogatives in establishing desired family values through parental expectations for desired child behavior and normal-range discipline practices.

### 2(a). Personality Disorder Traits

Present	Sub-Threshold	Absent	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The child's symptoms evidence all five of the following narcissistic/(borderline) personality disorder features displayed toward the targeted-rejected parent.
Sub-Criterion Met			
yes	no		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Grandiosity:</b> The child displays a grandiose perception of occupying an inappropriately elevated status in the family hierarchy that is above the targeted-rejected parent from which the child feels empowered to sit in judgment of the targeted-rejected parent as both a parent and as a person.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Absence of Empathy:</b> The child displays a complete absence of empathy for the emotional pain being inflicted on the targeted-rejected parent by the child's hostility and rejection of this parent.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Entitlement:</b> The child displays an over-empowered sense of entitlement in which the child expects that his or her desires will be met by the targeted-rejected parent to the child's satisfaction, and if the rejected parent fails to meet the child's entitled expectations to the child's satisfaction then the child feels entitled to enact a retaliatory punishment on the rejected parent for the child's judgment of parental failures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Haughty and Arrogant Attitude:</b> The child displays an attitude of haughty arrogance and contemptuous disdain for the targeted-rejected parent.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<b>Splitting:</b> The child evidences polarized extremes of attitude toward the parents, in which the supposedly "favored" parent is idealized as the all-good and nurturing parent while the rejected parent is entirely devalued as the all-bad and entirely inadequate parent.

Pathogenic parenting that is creating significant

- ◆ **Developmental pathology** in the child  
(diagnostic indicator 1);
- ◆ **Personality disorder pathology** in the child  
(diagnostic indicator 2);
- ◆ **Delusional-psychiatric pathology** in the child  
(diagnostic indicator 3);

DSM-5 diagnosis:

**V995.51 Child Psychological Abuse, Confirmed.**



A confirmed DSM-5 diagnosis of  
V995.51 Child Psychological Abuse shifts  
professional and legal concerns from those of  
child custody and visitation to those of  
**child protection.**

# DSM-5 Diagnostic Considerations

---

- Child: V995.51 Child Psychological Abuse
- Allied Parent: 300.19 Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another (persecutory delusion imposed on the child)
- Targeted Parent: 309.81 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (complex trauma; traumatic grief)
- ICD-10: F-24 Shared Psychotic Disorder
- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV; emotional abuse of the ex-spouse using the child as the weapon)



# DSM-5 Diagnosis

---

Child: 309.4 Adjustment Disorder

V61.20 Parent-Child Relational Problem

V61.29 Child Affected by Parental Relationship Distress

V995.51 Child Psychological Abuse, Confirmed

Allied Parent R/O 300.19 Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another (persecutory delusion imposed on the child)

Targeted Parent 309.81 R/O Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (complex trauma; traumatic grief)

# DSM-5 Diagnosis

---

Child: 309.4 Adjustment Disorder

V61.20 Parent-Child Relational Problem

V61.29 Child Affected by Parental Relationship Distress

**V995.51 Child Psychological Abuse, Confirmed**

Allied Parent R/O 300.19 Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another (persecutory delusion imposed on the child)

Targeted Parent 309.81 R/O Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (complex trauma; traumatic grief)



Assessment leads to diagnosis, and diagnosis guides  
treatment.

Complex Trauma



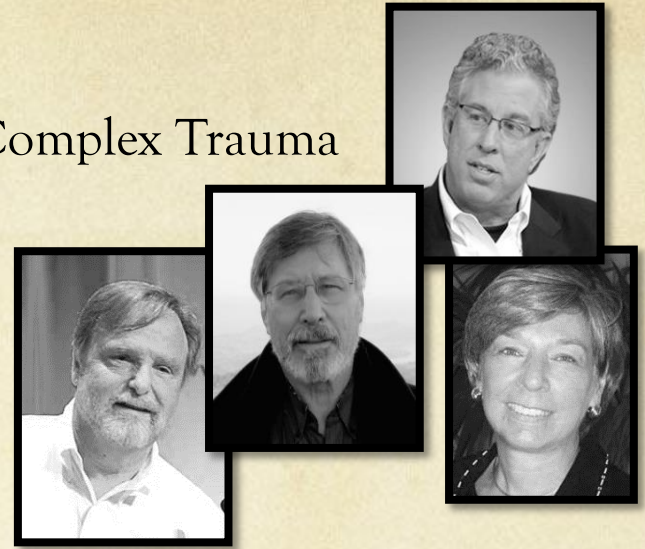
Diagnosis:

---

Complex Trauma



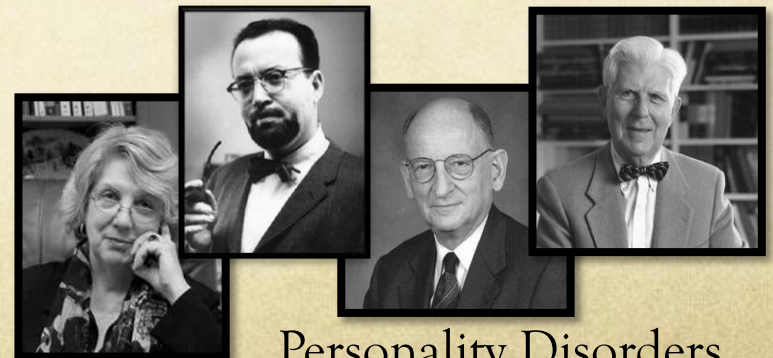
Complex Trauma



Foundations:

---

Complex Trauma



Personality Disorders



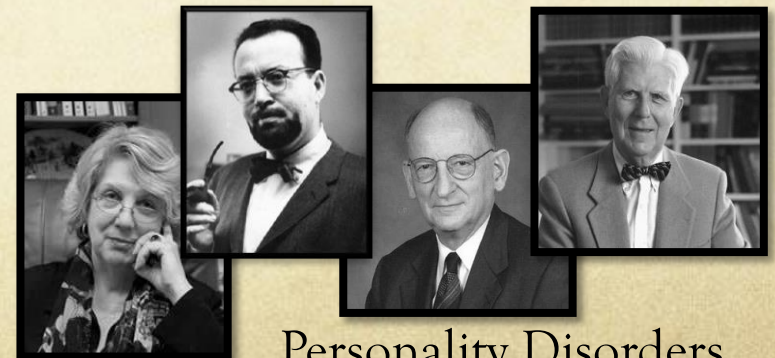
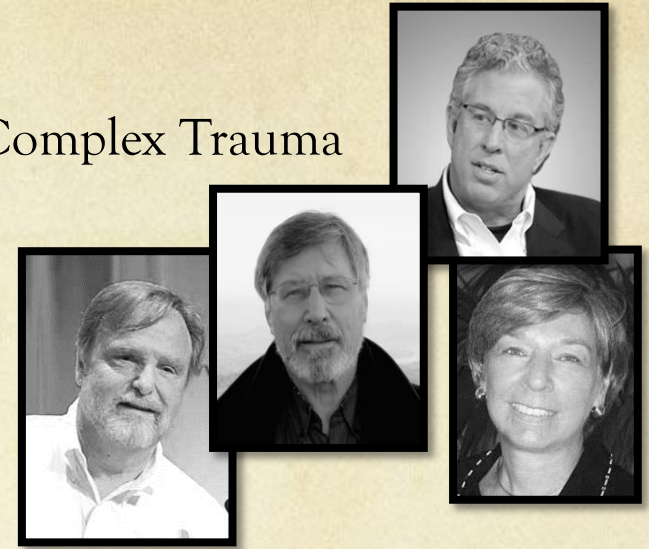
Attachment Pathology

## Foundations:

---

## Complex Trauma

## Complex Trauma



Personality Disorders



# Complex Trauma Description:

---



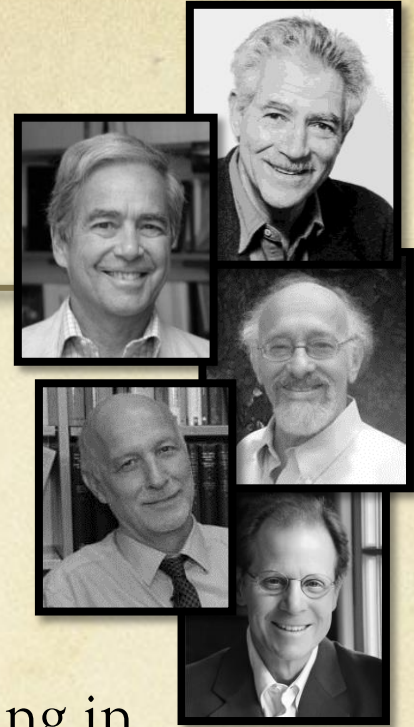
The **trans-generational transmission** of **attachment trauma** from the childhood of an allied **narcissistic/(borderline)** parent to the current family relationships, mediated by the personality disorder pathology of the allied parent, that is itself a product of this parent's childhood **attachment trauma**.



# Neuro-Developmental Description:

---

The child is being used in a **role-reversal relationship** as a **regulatory object** to stabilize the fragile self-structure of an allied narcissistic/(borderline) parent which is collapsing in response to the inherent rejection and abandonment surrounding divorce; surrounding the **loss of the regulating spousal attachment figure**.







Solution-Focused

---

Family Systems Therapy

# Schools of Psychotherapy

---

- Psychoanalytic (Freud and the couch)
- Humanistic-Existential (self-actualization and growth)
- Cognitive-Behavioral (lab rats and reinforcement)
- Family Systems Therapy (family relationships)



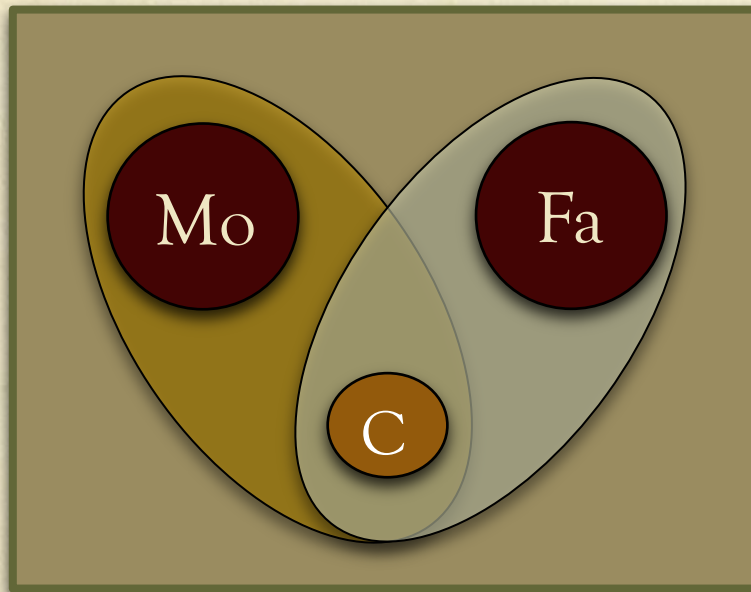
Divorce ends the marriage.

Divorce does not end the family.

When there are children, there will always be a family

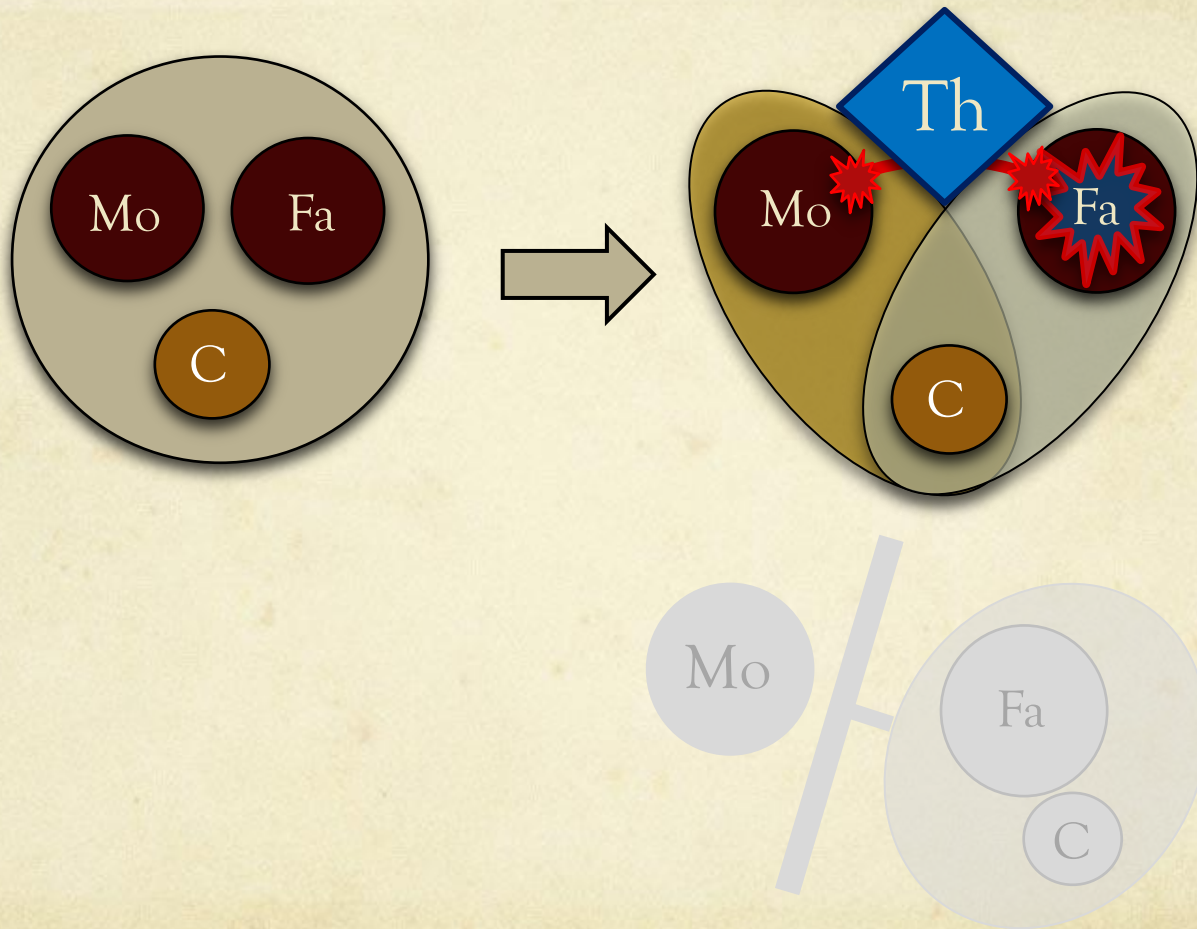
Solution Focused:

## A Healthy Separated Family Structure

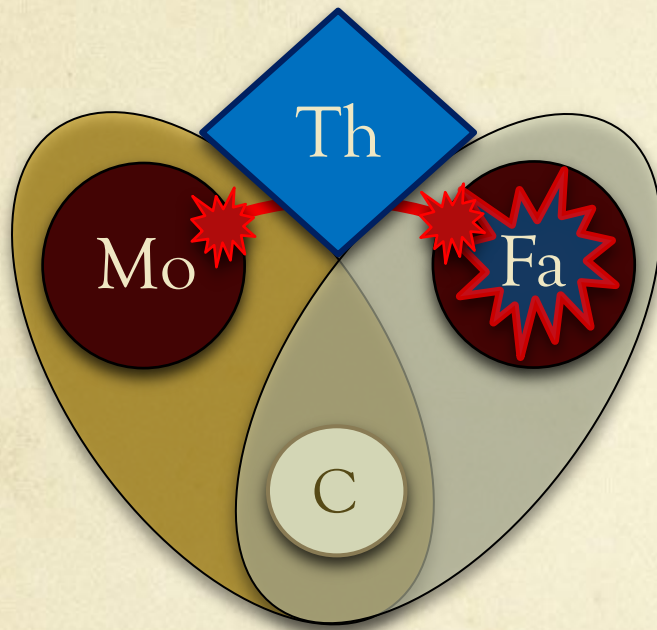




# Stabilized Transition:



# Solution Focused:



The treatment focus is on creating the solution:

A healthy separated family structure - united by the shared co-parenting and shared bonds of affection of each parent with the child.