

Science Shift: Parent Alienation is Child Abuse and Violence

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*“Your Honor,
You ordered an abuser to take care of me. You and your expert witnesses are looking away. Why can’t you see it? Why do you not want to see it? My other parent has been telling you, but you think, “he said, she said.” You prefer not to change things. Can you please stop doing things the way you’ve done them for years? It is hurting me. Doctors now are saying I am being abused. I may look healthy, but I am not. Neither is my abuser. Please, stop looking away from me. Please, stop looking away from my abuser.*

Please read what the lawyer below is saying about what professors of social work and of psychology are saying about abuse. So you can help me. So you can help both my parents.” - Millions of Children Manipulated by a Pathologically-oppositional Custodial Parent.

A professor of social work published this month in Psychology Today something from which no mental health professional, no judge, no lawyer in family court can look away. A health care professional, clinician and professor said unequivocally and definitively:

1. Parental Alienation is child abuse.
2. Parental Alienation is family violence.
3. Parental Alienation is human emotional aggression.

If someone in a family law case raises the concern of Parent Alienation, they are raising the possibility that a child in the care of the court (parens patriae), and in the care of a custodial parent, is being abused. Repeat: a child may be experiencing abuse.

Not only would the child be being victimized, but the child may be being used as an instrument to abuse the other parent: intimate partner violence. Repeat: domestic violence.

This means you need to act accordingly. Yes, you - lawyer. Yes, you - judge. Yes, you - mental health professional. Yes, you - custody evaluator. Yes, you - Guardian Ad Litem. You need to do your job: you need to protect that child. It is your ethical, legal and moral obligation and mandate.

Dr. Edward Kruk explains something both jurists and scientists understand: condition precedent. Dr. Kruk says that for violence and abuse to be flagged, two conditions must be present: 1) significant human injury, 2) resulting from human action.

Dr. Kruk is alerting you: significant human injury caused by human action are critically present in **Parental Alienation**.

Dr. Kruk is not the only learned professional saying Parent Alienation is abuse. **Dr. Craig Childress** of The Childress Institute for Child Development, and former University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, **Dr. Richard Warshak**, have been saying the same: Parent Alienation is child abuse and partner abuse. Colorado State University social psychologist **Dr. Jennifer Harman** (co-author in cited article below) urges psychological, legal and child custodial disciplines to "**recognize parental alienation as a form of both child abuse and intimate partner violence.**" Emphasis Added.

Dr. Kruk describes Parent Alienation as:

- 1) "a child's reluctance or refusal to have a relationship with a parent,
- 2) for illogical, untrue or exaggerated reasons,
- 3) as a result of one parent engaging in the long-term use of a variety of aggressive behaviors that,
- 4) harm, damage and destroy the relationship between a child and the other parent.
- 5) The target parent is demonized and undermined as a parent worthy of the child's love and attention."

Dr. Childress's definition is similar and uses constructs **fundamental to professional mental health competency**:

- 1) a cross-generational coalition resulting in 2) a child's emotional cutoff of a parent, for which multiple DSM-5 diagnoses are required: 309.4 Adjustment Disorder with mixed disturbance of emotions and conduct, V61.20 Parent-Child Relational Problem, V61.29 Child Affected by Parental Relationship Distress, V995.51 Child Psychological Abuse, Confirmed. See Bowlby, Minuchin, Beck, van der Kolk, Kernberg, Bowen, Millon.

WARNING TO MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND JURISTS:

You are now effectively on notice. Professors and practitioners of Social Work, Psychology and Psychiatry are telling you that children and parents in your care are potentially in danger of child abuse and intimate partner violence via diagnosable pathologies of Parent Alienation.

Mental health professionals, judges, lawyers, Guardians Ad Litem: Dr. Kruk is informing you where you can fulfill your ethical duty to educate yourself of developments in your professions (citations below):

Kruk identifies three articles that signal a shift in psychological science. The articles:

- “identify and categorize parental alienation as a form of both child abuse and family violence.
- indicate the scientific discovery that parental alienation is more prevalent and damaging than is commonly assumed, affecting millions of children and parents around the globe.
- say that the lack of acknowledgement and the denial of the phenomenon by many legal and mental health professionals is wrong.
- are a call to action toward the development and testing of effective educational, mental health, and legal interventions to prevent and mitigate the effects of parental alienation as a form of intimate terrorism.” Emphasis Added.

Note Bene, the articles:

- "provide a comprehensive literature review and research roundup relating to the behaviors of alienating parents,
- inform of the impact of these behaviors on children and target parents,
- inform that alienating behaviors and impacts are measured by **current public health and legal definitions of child abuse and family violence**,
- provide an index of parental alienating behaviors (a classification of the abusive behaviors of perpetrators),
- categorize the effects of parental alienation on victim children and target parents,
- include implications for policy and practice in both the legal and mental health fields, including preventive and treatment strategies,
- provide a comprehensive overview of parental alienation in regard to identification, etiology and intervention,
- discuss the paradigm shift that is occurring in parental alienation prevention,
- address professional misunderstandings, and,
- examine practice implications for mental health professionals." Emphasis Added.

Dr. Kruk further warns the mental health and legal professional communities:

continuing to practice as is is tantamount to professionally victimizing the victim and allowing a perpetrator of abuse to “continue acting aggressively and abusing power in the family dynamic.”

Dr. Kruk is warning that, “**it is unethical practice to ignore Parental Alienation as a form of child abuse and family violence.**”

Kruk also warns that Parental Alienation, “as a form of family violence and child abuse warrants a wide range of interventions: a child protection response, in recognition of the safety needs of an affected child.”

Kruk concludes his warning by telling us that the new articles, “signal a major advance in our collective understanding of parental alienation not only as a widespread phenomenon that needs greater attention by the psychological community, but as a serious form of child abuse and family violence that warrants an urgent response at the highest levels of professional practice and socio-legal policy.”

Dr. Kruk’s post in Psychology Today can be found at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/co-parenting-after-divorce/201901/parental-alienation-child-abuse-and-family-violence?fbclid=IwAR2dgyjsFLAXES6LxyZegVIjA1luh2P4lB9dNxpr-elxBO42FgLGJgMU4o>.

The articles on which Dr. Kruk bases his warnings are:

Kruk, E. (2018). “Parental Alienation as a Form of Emotional Child Abuse: The Current State of Knowledge and Directions for Future Research,” *Family Science Review*, 22 (4), 141-164.

Harman, J., Kruk, E. & Hines, D. (2018). “Parental Alienating Behaviors: An Unacknowledged Form of Family Violence,” *Psychological Bulletin*, 144 (12), 1275-1299.

von Boch-Galhau, W. (2018). “Parental Alienation (Syndrome) - A serious form of psychological child abuse,” *Mental Health and Family Medicine*, 13, 725-739.

Author’s recommendation to parent and child victims and their lawyers, based on Dr. Kruk’s message:

- 1. If your client is, or if you are, a child or parent victim of parent alienation and legal, judicial or mental health professionals do not act in accordance with their professional ethics standards - file a well-documented complaint with their ethics committee along with Dr. Kruk’s article, and consider alerting the public that they may be in danger by being exposed to professionally negligent, incompetent and unethical professionals.*
- 2. I strongly urge you to consider devising a way to use Dr. Kruk’s article as part of your evidentiary and litigation strategy. I urge you to place Dr. Kruk’s article into the possession of all involved in your clients’ cases: mental health professionals, Guardians Ad Litem, attorneys and judges.*

Author’s warning to judges, mental health professionals and lawyers:

- 3. You now have no reason not to act in your professional capacity rapidly to protect a child in your care. If you are presented with the opportunity to investigate if a child is being abused, and you do not - judges: you are abusing your discretion, you are abusing your power.*

Mental health professionals and lawyers: you may be committing malpractice if you omit to act to protect a child from child abuse, or act in furtherance of child abuse, based on these warnings from PhDs, PsyDs, MDs and JDs - you may be an accomplice to child abuse to effectuate domestic violence.

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legal and human rights of parents and children facing pathologically-oppositional parents in family court.

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