Parental Alienation is Real

What is PA?

Parental alienation (PA) occurs when a child aligns with one parent and rejects their other parent for reasons that are not legitimate. This is different from estrangement, when a child’s resistance to have a relationship is justified. Causing PA in a child is a psychological abuse.

What causes PA?

Abusive parents often use their children as weapons to harm the other parent and narcissist them. Domestic violence researchers call this behavior a form of coercive control. Scientists who study PA call this very same behavior “parental alienation.” There are ten core terms describing the same phenomenon.

Is research on PA “scientific?”

Clinical, legal, and scientific evidence on PA has accumulated for over 35 years. There have been over 1,000 scholarly papers published on the topic, and the empirical research on an topic has expanded greatly over the last few years, leading to what has been considered a “blossoming” of the scientific field.

Are there recognized criteria for the diagnosis of PA?

Yes. There is a great deal of conformity among authorities on PA as to there being clear and discernible diagnostic criteria. These criteria are found in a simple Five-Factor Model.

How many children are alienated from a parent?

At least 3.9 million children in the U.S. are experiencing PA, which is three times as many children in the U.S. are alienated from a parent than there are children with autism.

How does PA affect alienated parents?

Alienated parents are unable to get closure and have unresolved grief with the loss of their children. They suffer from being the target of abusive behaviors of the alienating parent. They have high levels of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, and many become suicidal.

How serious is PA for children?

Causing PA in a child is a serious form of psychological abuse and results in the same types of outcomes that other abused children experience: stress and adjustment disorders (e.g., PTSD, anxiety), psychosocial problems and externalizing behaviors, and suicide risks.

How can PA be stopped?

Legal and professional recognition of the problem (e.g., adding parental alienation to child abuse statutes). Funding for research describing the same phenomenon. Funding for training of legal and mental health professionals.

Reference


