

Are You Aware of the Dynamics that Lead to Therapist Alienation?

By Dr. Kathleen M. Reay - September 5, 2011



It's not uncommon to work with clients who are undergoing the devastating effects of a high-battle divorce or what I refer to as a "toxic divorce." Parental alienation (PA) is a particularly pernicious outcome of dysfunctional family relationships. As clinicians, it's important for us to all seek to understand the complexity of the continuum

of alienation. There are distinct differences between the normal preferences created in everyday family life, the dynamics that lead to justifiable estrangement, and the insidious impact of the unjustifiable processes that provoke the pathology that is parental alienation syndrome (PAS). Families where PA and PAS exist are not a matter of business as usual; entirely different therapeutic skills are needed. For e.g., the heads of these toxic families have been described as cult leaders. The children and other family members who refuse to be followers of the cult leader are treated with cruelty. Alienated children literally have their critical thinking taken away and are forced to align with the cult leader. This becomes a desperate survival issue for them. They no longer understand that the targeted parent and relatives that represent one half of their heritage still love them. They are helpless in that they are unable to help the child to maintain anything close to an objective reality about their family. Without exposure to healthy people, brainwashed/programmed children become increasingly bizarre, accusing the target parent of a host of terrible behaviour that they have never done. Therapists who are not trained in the special techniques that these families require often fall into the trap of believing the alienating parent and the programmed child and make the egregious mistake of contributing to the problem. This is what is referred to as "Therapist Alienation". There are few therapists in the US and Canada that have had advanced training in how to handle these cases and the need is great. If this is a specialty that interests you, you could make a powerful contribution to the distressed

families that are affected by a serious dysfunction that far too many divorcing parents and their children experience.

What's the Prevalence of PAS?



At this time, we don't know the exact prevalence of PAS. Based on empirical evidence to date, it's estimated that approximately one-quarter million children are exposed to or suffer from PAS each year in the US alone. It's heartbreaking because the prevalence of PAS is too often overlooked by the judiciary, mental health professionals, and the media. There are far too many children in society who are suffering from this very real form of abuse

and yet have not been identified as experiencing it. Perhaps the primary reason for there being such limited research available on the prevalence and incidence of PAS is because it is extremely difficult to accurately establish the point at which alignment and parental criticism begins. This is complicated by the fact that there are varying definitions for PA. What we do know for sure is that PAS is not just a Canadian and American phenomenon. To date, psychological and legal literature is available in at least 30 countries and the long-term consequences of this devastating form of child abuse are staggering.

How Can I Learn More to Ensure that I Don't Contribute to the Dysfunction?

Toxic Divorce: Concepts, Understanding and Powerful Strategies for Alienated Parents and Professionals – 1 full day workshop

This seminal workshop will advance your understanding of parental alienation. It will offer a clear and insightful view into the potential dangers and pitfalls of divorce at its worst. This workshop will help participants not only identify what is happening to them or someone they know but help them heal from the devastating effects of a toxic divorce and parental alienation. **This is not only a must attend for anyone overwhelmed by their divorce and feeling caught off guard by what is happening to them but a must attend for legal and mental health professionals.**

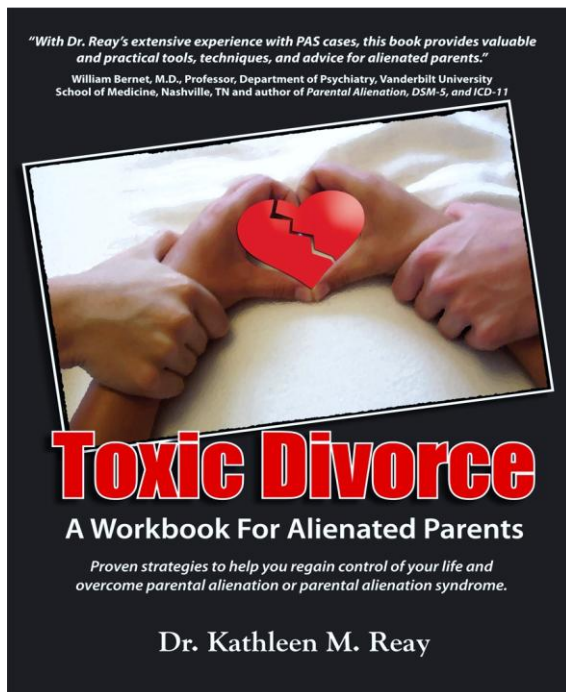
Dr. Kathleen M. Reay will highlight the differences between the normal preferences for a child or youth to prefer one parent over the other in intact, blended, separating, divorcing, and divorced families, the dynamics that lead to parental alienation (PA), a legitimate form of justifiable estrangement, and the insidious impact of the unjustifiable processes that provoke the pathology that is PAS. She will discuss the developmental

differences in manifestation, the variations in the severity of PAS, the long-term effects of PAS, the psychological characteristics of alienated children, the psychological characteristics of alienating parents, as well as describe the factors that fuel PAS including issues relating to the present structures of the legal system and therapist alienation. Dr. Reay will also offer valuable and practical tools, techniques, and advice for alienated parents and professionals based on up-to-date scientific research findings.

All in all, Dr. Reay will bring over twenty years of clinical expertise and insights to present effective and practical strategies to help alienated parents regain control of their lives and overcome PA or PAS.

For more info or to register, please click on <http://www.parentalalienationhelp.org> or <http://www.iipas.org> The workshop fee includes Dr. Reay's new book below.

Recently Launched!



Toxic Divorce: A Workbook for Alienated Parents by Dr. Kathleen Reay

If your clients are undergoing the devastating effects of a high battle divorce, **Toxic Divorce: A Workbook for Alienated Parents** provides up-to-date scientific knowledge, understanding, real-life examples, step-by-step directions, and powerful strategies to deal with the ramifications of parental alienation (PA) or parental alienation syndrome (PAS). **Toxic Divorce** is a must read for educators, mental health professionals and legal professionals. Professionals unfamiliar with the land-mines in understanding this

dynamic may innocently, and unintentionally, aggravate the situation by supporting the alienation.

“With Dr. Reay’s extensive experience with PAS cases, this book provides valuable and practical tools, techniques, and advice for alienated parents, clinicians, legal professionals, and collaborative professionals alike.”

William Bernet, M.D., Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, TN and author of *Parental Alienation, DSM-5. and ICD-11.*

“Dr. Reay answers the questions that many parents in the throws of high conflict divorce ask in a succinct manner. She provides real life examples and step-by-step directions that help prevent alienated parents and children from further victimization and trauma. Her book is comprehensive and easy to read and understand.”

Douglas Darnall, Ph.D., Author, *Beyond Divorce Casualties: Reunifying the Alienated Family.*

For more information or to purchase *Toxic Divorce: A Workbook for Alienated Parents*, please visit <http://www.parentalalienationhelp.org> or <http://www.iipas.org>. The book is also carried through all major online bookstores globally.