

DSM ACCEPTANCE BENEFITS BOTH GENDERS

Acceptance of the PAS into the DSM Benefits Both Genders.

The purpose of making a diagnosis is not only to rule a syndrome in. It is also necessary for RULING A SYNDROME OUT.

Regarding Fathers:

We know that fathers become victims of the PAS in greater numbers than do mothers because mothers have residential custody in greater numbers, and access to the child is the environment in which the PAS thrives. (Non-residential parents, however, can be successful in achieving an alienation but it occurs less frequently.) So a great number of fathers are affected by the lack of a diagnosis in this regard. Without a diagnosis, forensic evaluators and mental health professionals cannot assess for it and then educate the judiciary that it is present in the case before the court. In actuality, the clearly defined 8 symptoms as identified by Gardner as indicative of the PAS makes diagnosis relatively easy. (24 of the alienated parents in my book were fathers; 8 were mothers. And 5 non-residential parents were the alienators.)

Lacking the diagnosis of the PAS in the DSM further makes it more difficult for fathers to exonerate themselves from false allegations of domestic violence. (making false allegations of domestic violence is a common alienating maneuver.) Many attorneys for the father have expressed to me that they cannot argue a case to the judge that a false allegation of domestic violence against their client is an alienating tactic and therefore spurious because you cannot have a symptom for a diagnosis that does not exist.

Regarding Mothers:

Without a diagnosis of the PAS in the DSM, the forensic evaluator will be unable to determine that the syndrome is NOT PRESENT:

this means that women who are falsely accused of engaging in alienating behaviors have no way of defending against a fallacious allegation. I have been able to help exonerate several mothers who were falsely accused of facilitating an alienation because I had the knowledge of what to assess for. However, MOST mental health professionals have no idea about the characteristic family interactional pattern of the PAS, which child psychiatrists labeled as "the perverse or pathological triangle" as far back as the 1950s. Understanding and assessing for this dysfunctional family interactional pattern-----the co-option of a child by one parent to the exclusion and deprecation of the other parent----is the basis of the training of family therapists in understanding family dynamics. Regrettably, the other mental health modalities only minimally educate to look for family dynamics. And family therapy comprises only a small percentage of the mental health field. If the PAS is added to the

DSM-5, it will be a tool which these other mental health professionals can consult for ruling in or ruling out the diagnosis of the PAS.

Without a tool to rule out alienation, women have difficulty establishing a legitimate case of domestic violence when their partner asserts innocence, claiming she is engaging in the alienating maneuver of making false allegations. (By the way, men are also victims of domestic violence by their partners or former partners. The existence is underreported in part due to the fact that men are frequently too embarrassed to come forward when they have been the victims of domestic violence. But more significantly, many fathers who were portrayed in my book had been victims of domestic violence but did not file a report because they considered the adverse effects of doing so on their children.)

Mothers are also victims of the PAS, and they generally lack the funds to compete in the legal proceedings that follow. This is an extreme disadvantage for mothers. And when a mother does not

have her child, she has to deal with the question, "What must you have done?"

Ambiguity prevails, and this gives license to a segment in both genders to abuse the system, create havoc for their former partners, and harm children. We need the CLARITY of a diagnosis to determine when and when not there is the PAS and when and when not there is domestic violence.

If we are to be honest with ourselves and truly protect children from abuse, we must recognize that there are those in both genders who make false allegations of PAS as well as false allegations of domestic violence. We must also recognize that both genders are victims of the PAS and of domestic violence.