



Treatment Considerations: Children and Adolescents Impacted by Parent Alienation and Executive Dysfunction

Myth	Fact
Importance of early identification and intervention strategies	Early identification and intervention strategies are essential in addressing parental alienation and executive dysfunction. to minimize the negative impact on children's development and improve their well-being. By intervening early provides professionals and caregivers appropriate support, guidance, and resources to help children overcome challenges, promote healthy functioning, and build resilience. Additional impacts will mitigating long-term consequence, promote healthy coping mechanisms, enhancing resilience, prevent escalation of conflicts with timely support to prevent development delays.
Key Professional roles	Each professional plays a crucial role in addressing parent alienation effects on children and families
Therapist's Roles in Addressing Parent PA	Assessment psychoeducation, supportive counseling, co-parenting guidance, reunification, individual therapy for child collaboration with professional's advocacy and referrals
Important attributes and considerations for professionals	Open minded, willing to learn counter intuitive approaches to assessment and treatment to collaborate and not fuel unhealthy mindsets. Awareness of assessment/treatment tools such as the Five Factor Model. Avoid counterintuitive alignments. Use a systems approach. Education of PA paradigm, and involve targeted parent in treatment asap. Understand attachment theory, brainwashing, false memories in children, characterological disorders, trauma in children. Identify and seek to remove actively abusive caregivers. Support the rebuilding of positive experiences and relationships with non-actively abusive caregivers, discuss impact of trauma while providing emotional support and healing to build resilience, coping skills and encourage healthy communication & relationships.
Interventions targeting both parental alienation and executive dysfunction	Interventions target both parental alienation and executive dysfunction to address the underlying factors contributing to PA while simultaneously supporting the child and family in their healing and development. Interventions include collaborative approach to Family Therapy, Co-Parenting Education, Parent Individual Therapy, Parent-Child Relationship and Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions.
Targeted Parent's Role in Managing Parent Alienation	Show a pattern of behavior using 5 Factor Model, education, seek knowledgeable professional and personal support, maintain wellness habits, emotional Resilience, foster positive communication, Document extensively, seek legal guidance, neutral communications with the alienating parent, consistency and stability, sharing with professionals, focus on the Child's Well-being, engage in therapy and support, comply with court orders and seek modification as needed.
Legal System's Role in Supporting Targeted Parents	Understanding Parental Alienation as a Form of Child Abuse, provide Legal Representation Court Orders and Enforcement: support Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Parental Education Programs Access to Resources and Support Services Protection of Parent-Child Relationship
Standardized and reliable tools to identify trauma, develop treatment plans and track progress	<i>Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)</i> : A questionnaire completed by a child's caregivers, measures behavioral and emotional problems. <i>Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children (TSCC)</i> : A self-report questionnaire completed by children, measures post-traumatic stress symptoms, anxiety, and depression. <i>Child and Adolescent Trauma Screen (CATS)</i> : A brief, self-report questionnaire completed by children, screens for a range of trauma exposures and related symptoms. <i>Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children (DISC)</i> : A structured interview conducted with children and their caregivers, assesses a wide range of psychiatric disorders, including post-traumatic stress. <i>Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale for Children and Adolescents (CAPS-CA)</i> : A structured interview conducted by a clinician, assesses for post-traumatic stress disorder in children and adolescents. Assesses the severity of PTSD symptoms and their impact on daily functioning in children and adolescents who have experienced a traumatic event.
Lawyer's Role in Supporting a Targeted Parents	Knowledge of the key issues, legal advice, case assessment guidance, court strategies, representation, preparation of legal documents, negotiation, settlement discussions, advocacy for parental rights, collaboration with professionals, assertive application of legal remedies and enforcement.

Annotated References

Reference	General Findings/Conclusions
Baude, A. <i>et al.</i> (2016). Child adjustment in joint physical custody versus sole custody: A meta-analytic review. <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i>. 57(5), 338-360.	This meta-analytic study found that “better adjustment for young people in joint custody was only significant for those who spent an equal or almost equal amount of time with their two parents.”
Bauserman, R. (2002) Child adjustment in joint-custody versus sole-custody arrangements: A meta-analytic review. <i>Journal of Family Psychology</i>, 16(1), 91–102.	A meta-analysis of 33 studies compared adjustment between children being raised in sole custody and children being raised in joint custody after divorce. Children were found to be better adjusted in areas of self-esteem, family relationships, divorce related adjustment, academic achievement, and emotional and behavioral adjustment, when raised by parents who shared legal and physical custody.
Bauserman, R. (2012). A meta-analysis of parental satisfaction, adjustment, and conflict in joint custody and sole custody following divorce. <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i>. 53(6), 464-488.	“[B]oth JC [joint physical custody] mothers and JC fathers report less conflict with their ex-spouse, and more emotional support and positive feelings in the relationship. Frequency of relitigation is also less in cases of JC (especially for specific types of actions, such as child support modification).
Emery, R. (2004). <i>The truth about children and divorce</i>. New York, NY: Viking.	While divorce is an adjustment for children, it does not necessarily cause lasting damage. It is a major stressor, but “pain is not pathology. Grief is not a mental disorder.”
Fabricius, W. (2003) Listening to children of divorce: New findings that diverge from Wallerstein, Lewis, and Blakeslee, <i>Family Relations</i> 52(4), 385-396	College students preferred equal time with parents after divorce. They reported better adult relationships with parents, feeling more supported by their parents, and receiving more college support from parents when they had equal parenting time arrangements after divorce.
Fabricius, W. & Hall, J. A. (2005). Young adults’ perspectives on divorce living arrangements. <i>Family Court Review</i>, 38(4), 446–461.	820 college students provided their perspectives on the parents’ divorce. The majority wished they had been able to spend more time with their fathers while growing up. Their perspective was that their fathers wanted more time, but their mothers did not want them to have more time.
Fabricius, W. <i>et al.</i> (2018). What happens when there is presumptive 50/50 parenting time? An Evaluation of Arizona’s New Child Custody Statute. <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i>. 59(5), 414-428.	Four years after Arizona enacted its shared parenting legislation, research showed that “the law functions as a rebuttable presumption of equal parenting time; that it is evaluated positively overall in terms of children’s best interests” by “conciliation court staff, judges, mental health professionals, and attorneys” and that it “has a neutral impact on legal and interpersonal conflict.”
Fabricius, W. (2020). Equal parenting time: The case for a legal presumption. <i>The Oxford Handbook of Children and the Law</i> (pp. 453-476). Oxford University Press.	“[T]he overall pattern of evidence indicates that legal presumptions of equal parenting time would help protect children’s emotional security with each of their divorced parents, and consequently would have a positive effect on public health in the form of reduced long-term stress-related mental and physical health problems among children of divorce.”
Fernández-Kranz, D. <i>et al.</i> (2020). Bargaining under threats: The effect of joint custody laws on intimate partner violence.	Researchers in Spain found that presumptions of equal shared parenting led to almost a 50% decrease in IPV among divorcing parents and to a significant reduction in female homicides by intimate partners.
Kloth-Zanard, Joan. 2022. Commonsense 101, article on family values that should proceed in divorce.	Review of 35 years of work with DV and Families who are dealing with high conflict custody situations and the family courts. This article shows a straight line between what goes on in an intact family, and how it should not change just because the parents are not getting along.
Kruk, E. (2013). <i>The Equal Parenting Presumption</i>. Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queens University Press.	Kruk addresses many of the myths concerning equal shared parenting, including its benefits to children in a wide variety of circumstances and its effect on parental conflict/cooperation.
Nielsen, L. (2017). Re- examining the research on parental conflict, coparenting, and custody arrangements. <i>Psychology, Public Policy, and Law</i>, 23, 211–231.	This article addresses four questions: (1) How much consideration should be given to co-parenting conflict when determining parenting time, (2) Do children have better outcomes when their divorced parents have low levels of conflict, (3) are children’s outcomes worsened by parents taking their divorces to court, and (4) are children’s outcomes better in sole-physical custody situations if the parents are conflicted and uncooperative?
Nielsen, L. (2018). Joint versus sole physical custody: Children’s outcomes independent of parent–child relationships, income, and conflict in 60 Studies, <i>Journal of Divorce & Remarriage</i>. 59(4) 247-281.	This article reviews the outcomes for children in joint physical custody (JPC) compared to those in sole physical custody (SPC) controlling for income, coparenting conflict, and quality of the parent-child relationship. Regardless of income, conflict, or the quality of children’s relationships with their parents, JPC generally children had better outcomes on most or on all measures.
Templer et al., 2017; Warshak, 2020), g., Harman, Saunders, et al., 2021; Reay, 2015; Warshak, 2019	A sample of 83 severely alienated children and adolescents were enrolled with the parents whom they had rejected in a 4-day Family Bridges educational workshop. The program was conducted after court orders had placed the children in the custody of their rejected parent. The parents who participated with the children in the workshop, and the professional workshop leaders, reported large improvements in the children’s alienated behavior, changes that reflected statistically significant and large effects.