

## MARS BC

Websites with more information about Parental Alienation

Nanaimo Men's Resource Centre  
www.nanaimomen.com

PsyCare: Parental Alienation Page  
www.parentalalienation.com

Fathers Are Capable Too  
www.fact.on.ca/Info/Info\_pas

Separated Parenting Access and Resource Centre  
www.deltabravo.net/custody/

The Rachel Foundation for Family Reintegration  
www.rachelfoundation.org

Breakthrough Parenting  
www.breakthroughparenting.com/

Creative Therapeutics  
www.rgardner.com/refs/

## MARS BC

Mens Affordable Resources Society

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## References

1. Deirdre Conway Rand, PhD: *The Spectrum of Parental Alienation Syndrome (Part I)*, American Journal of Forensic Psychology, Volume 15, Number 4, 1997
2. Deirdre Conway Rand, PhD: *The Spectrum of Parental Alienation Syndrome (Part II)*, American Journal of Forensic Psychology, Volume 15, Number 4, 1997
3. Wallerstein JS, Kelly JB: *Surviving the breakup: How children and parents cope with divorce*. New York, Basic Books, 1980
4. Wallerstein JS, Blakeslee S: *Second Chances*. New York, Ticknor & Fields, 1989'6. Turkat ID: *Child visitation interference in divorce*. Clinical Psychology Review, 1994; 14:8:737-742
5. Clawar SS, Rivlin BV: *Children Held Hostage: Dealing with Programmed and Brainwashed Children*. Chicago, American Bar Association, 1991
6. Johnston JR, Campbell LE: *Impasses of Divorce: The Dynamics and Resolution of Family Conflict*. New York, The Free Press, 1988
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8. Johnston JR, Roseby V: *In the Name of the Child: A Developmental Approach to Understanding and Helping Children of Conflicted and Violent Divorce*. New York, The Free Press, 1997
9. National Council on Children's Rights: *CAPTA revised to provide relief for false allegations*. Speak Out for Children, Fall, 1996/ Winter 1997
10. Gardner RA: *The Parental Alienation Syndrome and the Differentiation Between Fabricated and Genuine Child Sex Abuse*. Cresskill NJ, Creative Therapeutics, 1987

# MARS BC

## Mens Affordable Resources Society of British Columbia

*Identification and Impact of*

## PARENTAL ALIENATION



Helping Families —  
Men, Women and Children

Phone: 250-716-1551

# What is Parental Alienation?

- **Parental Alienation** is a distinctive family response to divorce in which the child becomes aligned with one parent and preoccupied with unjustified and/or exaggerated denigration of the other parent.
- In severe cases, the child's once-love-bonded relationship with the rejected, or target parent, is destroyed.
- Since first being identified by Dr. Richard Gardner, much controversy has surrounded the issue of parental alienation as to whether it is really an identifiable syndrome. Debate continues to rage, but it is not our intention to enter into that debate. Whether it is identified as Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS), simply as parental alienation, or as multitude of other related psychiatric disorders, it is simply our intention to address the problem.
- Claware and Rivlin, in a study published by the American Bar Association (ref. 5), claim that PAS was practiced to varying degrees by 80% of divorcing parents, with 20% engaging in such behaviors with their children at least once a day. J.R. Johnston found (refs. 6, 7 & 8) that 43% of children examined were in strong alignment with an alienating parent and 29% in mild alignment. These figures approach Gardner's estimate that 90% of the children he assessed in custody evaluations exhibit varying degrees of PAS.
- Parental alienation is destructive, irrespective of the gender of the alienating parent, and is considered to be a form of child abuse.
- According to *Statistics Canada* there were 69,088 divorces in Canada in 1998. If the average family size is 3.1 persons as cited in the 1996 census, with a minimum of 1.1 children per family, approximately 75,000 children were affected by divorce in 1998, not including the children of common law marriage. If parental alienation occurred in only 20% of these divorces, then 15,000 children are affected annually and possibly up to 60,000 when we apply the higher percentages suggested in some studies.

## Symptoms of Parental Alienation

Depending on the severity of the alienation, a child may exhibit all or some of the following behaviours:

1. The child is aligned with the alienating parent in a campaign of denigration against the target parent, with the child making active contributions
2. Rationalizations for deprecating the target parent are often weak, frivolous or absurd
3. Animosity toward the rejected parent lacks the ambivalence normal to human relationships
4. The child asserts that the decision to reject the target parent is his or her own, sometimes called the *independent thinker phenomenon*
5. The child reflexively supports the parent with whom he or she is aligned
6. The child expresses guiltless disregard for the feelings of the target or hated parent
7. Borrowed scenarios are present, i.e. the child's statements reflect themes and terminology of the alienating parent
8. Animosity is spread to the extended family and others associated with the target parent.

