**What is alienation and how is it created?**

**Jennifer Moné, Ph.D., LMFT**

What is Alienation?

Family Dynamic—involving the parents and the children whereby one parent is rejected by a child usually due to the other (favored) parent’s words and deeds

*Favored parent:*

*Rejected Parent*:

*Child Factors:*

*Other factors:*

The difference between alienation and PAS:

Continuum of severity within alienation cases:

Affinity-------Alignment---------------------Alienation Realistic Estrangement

Rejection is primarily due to alienation bx Justified fear, anxiety, etc primarily due to rejected parents’ bx

\*\*When a parent-child relationship is strained or eliminated due to abuse, the “alienation” term should NOT be used. Other terms, like estrangement, realistic estrangement, counter-productive parenting are more appropriate.

Alienation effects, risk factors, resiliency

Alienation effects on children:

Risk factors for children:

Resiliency factors:

If and when you see these dynamics, experts encourage an established framework for how to think about and proceed with such cases. Include:

* multiple hypotheses (don’t just believe the first parent or child who shares information)
* the many variables to consider
* your own biases.
* *Avoid* polarized, dichotomous thinking (“black/white” or simplistic thinking)

Great information on alienation

Drozd, L. M. & Olesen, N. W. (2004). Is it abuse, alienation, and/or estrangement? A decision tree. *Journal of Child Custody, 1*(3), 65-106.

Fidler, B. J. & Bala, N. (2010). Children resisting postseparation contact with a parent: Conceptions, controversies, and conundrums, *Family Court Review, 48*, 10-47.

Fidler, B. J., Bala, N., & Saini, M. (2012). Children who resist postseparation parental contact: A differential approach for legal and mental health professionals. New York: Oxford University Press.

*Family Court Review* (January 2010). [Special issue on children who refuse contact with a parent.]

*Welcome back Pluto* (2010). Trace Productions/WBP Media. Available at WelcomeBackPluto.com [Video production about alienation]

Resources at AFCCnet.org and professional local trainings and conferences through the CO chapter: COAFCC.org