

## PA and PAS Now Included in Several Encyclopedias

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The topics of *parental alienation* and *parental alienation syndrome* have been discussed in several large encyclopedias edited by and intended for mental health and legal professionals. This is important because these publications may help to establish in court that the concepts of PA and PAS have been accepted by the scientific community of mental health professionals. See the excerpts below from four encyclopedia articles in chronological order. Three of these articles discuss PA/PAS in a favorable manner, although one (in the *Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology*) criticizes PAS. The four encyclopedias cited below were all published by John Wiley & Sons. If you want copies of the entire encyclopedia articles, contact me at [william.bernet@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:william.bernet@vanderbilt.edu).

***Encyclopedia of Forensic Science*** (Parental Alienation, by Joseph Kenan and William Bernet, 2009). “In the context of divorce, the pathological alignment of a parent and a child resulting in the child’s rejection of the alienated parent was originally described by Wallerstein and Kelly. Gardner later introduced the term, *parental alienation syndrome*, to describe a diagnosable disorder occurring in the context of separation and divorce. Although Gardner contributed a good deal by describing the features of parental alienation, his work has been criticized because of his use of the word, ‘syndrome.’”

***Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology*** (Parental Alienation Syndrome, by Beth A. Venzke, 2010). “While acknowledging that PAS has not been openly accepted within psychology, some testifying experts still argue that PAS exists. Once again, no empirical research or data are offered; instead, the arguments in the courtroom tend to be mostly theoretical and based on reports by a small number of individuals who believe the syndrome is valid.”

***Encyclopedia of Special Education*** (Parental Alienation Syndrome, by Daniel J. Rybicki, 2014). Parental alienation syndrome (PAS) is a process label proposed by Gardner for describing how children in contested divorce situations can become hostile and distant from one of their parents. Parental alienation creates a singular, enmeshed relationship between a child and one parent. The fully alienated child does not wish to have any contact whatsoever with one parent and expresses only negative feelings for that parent and only positive feelings for the other parent. There are varying degrees to which this problem may manifest. Incidence rates remain largely unknown, although custody evaluators and family attorneys find repeated instances of this phenomenon in their caseloads.

***Encyclopedia of Clinical Psychology*** (Parental Alienation, by William Bernet, 2015). “Parental alienation is a mental condition in which a child – usually one whose parents are engaged in a high-conflict separation or divorce – allies himself or herself strong with one parent (the preferred parent) and rejects a relationship with the other parent (the alienated parent) without legitimate justification. ... The child has abnormal mental state (i.e., a false belief that the rejected parent is evil, dangerous, or not worthy of love), which drives abnormal behavior (i.e., strong avoidance of the alienated or rejected parent, even though they previously enjoyed a loving, nurturing relationship).”