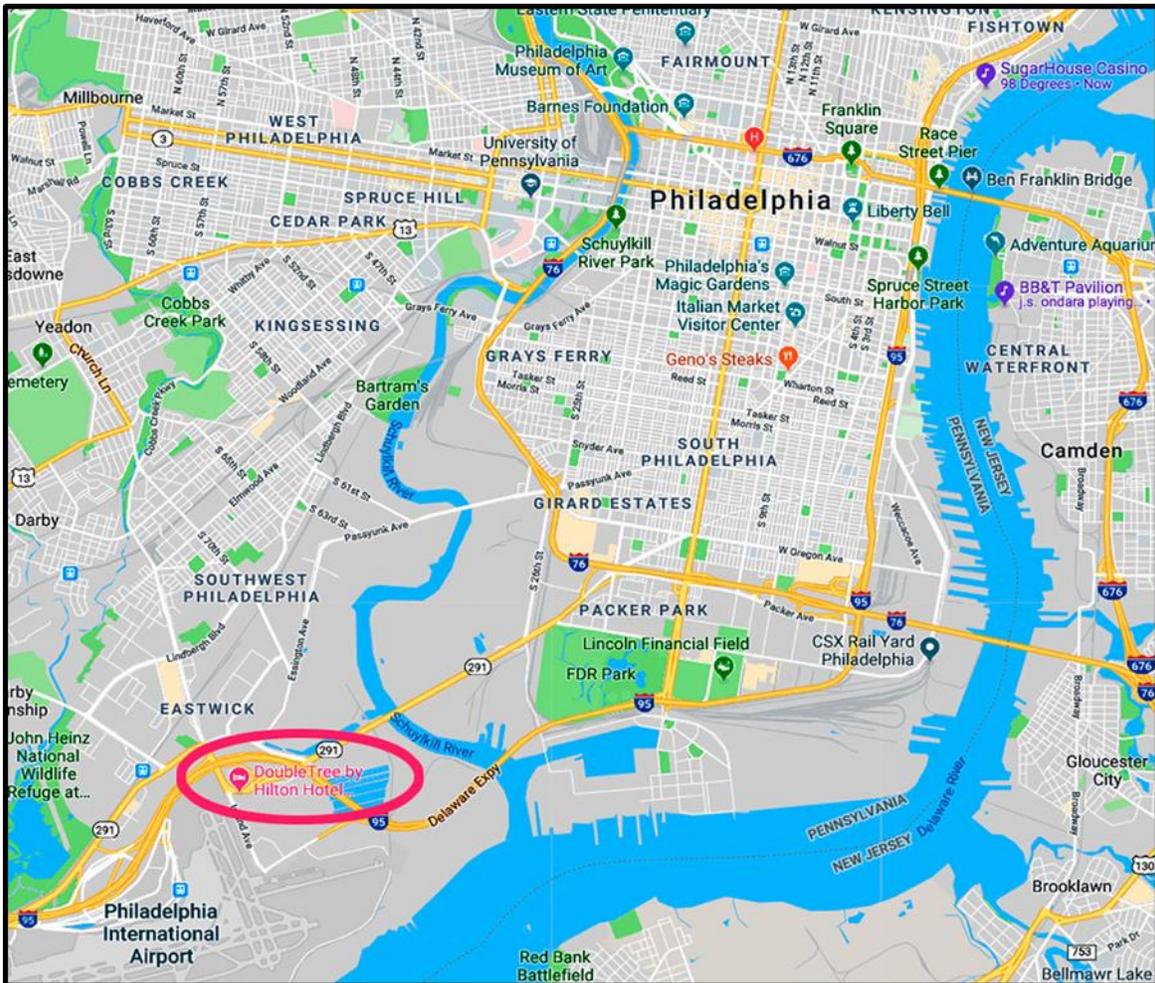


**THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
PARENTAL ALIENATION STUDY GROUP**

**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA  
September 12-14, 2019**





## Welcome to Philadelphia

The conference venue is the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Philadelphia Airport, 4509 Island Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

Philadelphia, the "City of Brotherly Love" and the fifth largest city in the United States, boasts worldclass culture, dining, and historical attractions. It is home to museums such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Rodin Museum, and the Barnes Foundation. A restaurant renaissance has led to a plethora of dining experiences, from fine dining to the Philadelphia cheesesteak sandwich. The city offers unparalleled historical attractions, including the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall.

For more information, go to <https://www.visitphilly.com/>.

# **Theme of PASG 2019**

## **Parental Alienation: Clinical, Legal, and Research Challenges and Opportunities**

### **PASG 2019 Committee Members**

#### **Executive Committee of PASG 2019**

Tom Janssen, General Chairman of PASG 2019

Amy J. L. Baker

William Bernet

#### **Program Committee**

Amy J. L. Baker, Chair

Linda Gottlieb

Ashish Joshi

Sandra Moon Dancer

#### **Marketing Committee**

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Karen Woodall

#### **Media Committee**

William McGee, Co-Chair

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#### **Arrangements Committee**

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#### **Thanks to Our Donors**

The leadership and members of PASG greatly appreciate the generosity of individuals and institutions who donate to this organization. Donations can be made through the website ([www.pasg.info](http://www.pasg.info)) or by making scheduled monthly contributions through PayPal.

Donations can also be made through the Amazon Smile program (by making purchases at [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)) and through the Network for Good (which conducts fundraising for nonprofit organizations).

## **Day One – Thursday, September 12 – Plenary Sessions**

**Coordinators for Day One: William Bernet and Sandra Moon Dancer**

- 8:15 - 8:30 Welcome
- 8:30 - 9:15 How Did We Get Here? Where Are We Headed?  
William Bernet
- 9:15 - 9:30 Introducing the Voice of the Targeted Parent into the Conference  
Sandra Moon Dancer
- 9:30 - 9:45 Personal Story 1 Robert Lowden
- 9:45 - 10:00 BREAK
- 10:00 - 10:45 Parental Alienation and Science: The Big Picture  
Amy J. L. Baker
- 10:45 - 11:00 Personal Story 2 Maureen MacNeill
- 11:00 - 11:45 Nuts and Bolts of Effective Therapy for the Continuum of Alienation  
Linda Gottlieb
- 11:45 - 12:00 Personal Story 3 Joe Rabiega
- 12:00 - 1:30 LUNCH
- 1:30 - 1:45 Personal Story 4 Cara Koch
- 1:45 - 2:30 Parental Alienation Doesn't Always Make Sense  
Steven G. Miller
- 2:30 - 3:15 Parental Alienation: The Legal Landscape and Pitfalls  
Ashish Joshi and Demosthenes Lorandos
- 3:15 - 3:30 BREAK
- 3:30 - 3:45 Personal Story 5 Mark Drejza
- 3:45 - 4:30 Questions and Answers: Dialogue between the Audience and Today's Presenters  
Demosthenes Lorandos (Moderator), Amy J. L. Baker, William Bernet, Linda Gottlieb,  
Ashish Joshi, and Steven G. Miller
- 4:30 - 5:00 Closing Of Day One And Directions For Day Two

## Day Two – Friday, September 13 – Parent Track

Coordinator for Parent Track: Sandra Moon Dancer

- 8:15 - 8:30 Welcome
- 8:30 - 9:15 The Four Bodies of Consciousness: Critical Awareness and the Importance of Balance for the Targeted Parent  
Sandra Moon Dancer
- 9:15 - 9:45 Shaming: A Powerful Tool in the Alienator’s Toolbox  
Margaret Jones
- 9:45 - 10:15 Forgiveness: The Key for a Better Tomorrow  
Chris Andexler
- 10:15 - 10:30 BREAK
- 10:30 - 12:00 Legal Panel Discussion: Preparing Your Case and Withstanding Cross-Examination  
Shazia Nagamia Sparkman (Moderator), Andrew Bossory, and Demosthenes Lorandos
- 12:00 - 1:30 LUNCH
- 1:15 - 1:30 Video in preparation for Systemic Therapy with Parental Alienation
- 1:30 - 2:00 **Join with Clinical Track** – Can We Force “Spontaneous” Reunification? Systemic Therapy with Parental Alienation  
Shuly Megged and Amittai Megged
- 2:00 - 3:00 **Join with Clinical Track** – Panel Discussion: Promising Recipes: Active Ingredients of Effective Outcomes in More Traditional Reunification Interventions  
Linda Gottlieb (Moderator), Colleen Murray, and Nick Woodall
- 3:00 - 3:15 BREAK
- 3:15 - 4:00 Questions and Answers: Exploring Challenges and Opportunities with Targeted Parent Presenters  
Sandra Moon Dancer (Moderator), Mark Drejza, Cara Koch, Robert Lowden, and Maureen MacNeill
- 4:00 - 5:00 Targeted Parents Insights for Impact  
Sandra Moon Dancer (Moderator)

## **Day Two – Friday, September 13 – Legal Track**

**Coordinator for Legal Track: Ashish Joshi**

- 8:15 - 8:30 Welcome
- 8:30 - 9:15 First Things First: It's a MISTAKE to Think Like a Lawyer When Representing Targeted Parents  
Steven G. Miller and Ashish Joshi
- 9:15 - 10:00 The Science Behind False Allegations of Child Abuse  
Shawn Wygant and Ben Burgess
- 10:00 - 10:15 BREAK
- 10:15 - 11:00 Unique Challenges for Targeted Parents: How Attorneys Can Use Parent Coaching to Help Clients  
Randy Flood and Brian Hart
- 11:00 - 12:00 How to Manage Children's Counsel, Child Protection Workers, Police, Parenting Coordinators, Therapists, and Evaluators  
Brian Ludmer
- 12:00 - 1:30 LUNCH
- 1:30 - 2:30 Panel Discussion: Legal Challenges in Dealing with Parental Alienation: A View from the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, and Sweden  
Ashish Joshi (Moderator), Marie-France Carlier, Jorge Guerra González, Lena Hellblom Sjögren, and Karen Woodall
- 2:30 - 3:00 Proactive Management of Parental Alienation Cases in Israeli Courts: A Novel Approach  
Philip Marcus
- 3:00 - 3:15 BREAK
- 3:15 - 4:00 Preparing to Confront the Adverse Mental Health Professional(s)  
Andrew Bossory and Cory Sprunger
- 4:00 - 4:30 Brave New World: What a Revamped Family Law System Would Look Like  
Catherine MacWillie
- 4:30 - 5:00 Questions and Answers: Dialogue between Attorneys and Audience Members  
Ashish Joshi (Moderator), Andrew Bossory, Brian Ludmer, and Cory Sprunger

## Day Two – Friday, September 13 – Clinical Track

Coordinator for Clinical Track: Linda Gottlieb

- 8:15 - 8:30 Welcome
- 8:30 - 9:45 Panel Discussion: Holding the Alienating Parent Accountable to the Court to Relinquish Alienating Behaviors: Imposing Time Limits  
Colleen Murray (Moderator), Linda Gottlieb, Joan Kloth-Zanard, and Amy van Gunst
- 9:45 - 10:05 Nipping Alienation in the Bud: Wouldn't It Be Lovely If We Went Out of Business?  
Walter Camos
- 10:05 - 10:20 BREAK
- 10:20 - 11:40 Panel Discussion: Crazy Making Issues in Alienation: Professional Alienation Collusion  
Linda Gottlieb (Moderator), Ben Burgess, Amy Van Gunst, and Shawn Wygant
- 11:40 - 12:00 Can We Force "Spontaneous" Reunification? Systemic Therapy with Parental Alienation (Part 1)  
Shuly Megged and Amittai Megged
- 12:00 - 1:30 LUNCH
- 1:30 - 2:00 **Join with Parent Track** – Can We Force "Spontaneous" Reunification? Systemic Therapy with Parental Alienation (Part 2)  
Shuly Megged and Amittai Megged
- 2:00 - 3:00 **Join with Parent Track** – Panel Discussion: Promising Recipes: Active Ingredients of Effective Outcomes in More Traditional Reunification Interventions  
Linda Gottlieb (Moderator), Colleen Murray, and Nick Woodall
- 3:00 - 3:15 BREAK
- 3:15 - 3:45 Assessments in the 21st Century: Evidence-Based Meets Expert System Technology  
Lisa Rothfus, Eric Rothfus, and Loretta Maase
- 3:45 - 4:30 Panel Discussion: Treating Adult Alienated Children: Dealing with the Pain of Visiting the Sins of the Adults on the Children—and Grandchildren  
Linda Gottlieb (Moderator), Joe Rabiaga, Suzanne Spencer Abel, and Karen Woodall
- 4:30 - 5:00 Common Clinical Mistakes  
Joshua Coleman

## Day Two – Friday, September 13 – Research Track

Coordinator for Research Track: Amy J. L. Baker

- 8:15 - 8:30 Welcome
- 8:30 - 8:45 Stories from the Family and Interpersonal Relationships Lab in Tasmania: A Summary of the Forgotten Families Project  
Mandy Matthewson
- 8:45 - 9:15 Research Brief: Prevalence of Adults Who Are the Targets of Parental Alienating Behaviors and Their Impact: Results from Three National Polls  
Jennifer Harman
- 9:15 - 9:45 Research Brief: Confusion and Consensus over Definitions  
William Bernet
- 9:45 - 10:00 BREAK
- 10:00 - 10:45 Two Research Briefs: Attitudes of Abused Children: Do They Exhibit the Eight Behavioral Manifestations of Parental Alienation?  
Amy J. L. Baker and Steven G. Miller
- 10:45 - 12:00 Panel Discussion: What Are the Pressing Research Questions in the Field?  
Jennifer Harman (Moderator), Mary Alvarez, and Stephen Morrison
- 12:00 - 1:30 LUNCH
- 1:30 - 2:00 Research Brief: Current Research Activities and Programming for Mild and Moderate Parent Rejection  
Mary Alvarez, Jennifer Harman, and Christine Turner
- 2:00 - 3:00 Passing a *Daubert* Hearing  
Demosthenes Lorandos
- 3:00 - 3:15 BREAK
- 3:15 - 3:45 Research Brief: Can Alienating Parents be Identified by Displays of Emotion?  
Heleen Koppejan
- 3:45 - 4:15 Research Brief: Using the Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire in Parental Alienation Research  
Joan Kloth-Zanard
- 4:15 - 5:00 Discussion: Involving the Next Generation of Researchers and Funders  
Stephen Morrison (Moderator)

## **Day Three – Saturday, September 14 – Plenary Sessions**

### **Coordinators for Day Three: Brian Ludmer and Tom Janssen**

- 8:15 - 9:00 Brief Reports from Day Two Tracks  
Brian Ludmer (Moderator), Sandra Moon Dancer, Ashish Joshi, Linda Gottlieb, and Amy J. L. Baker
- 9:00 - 10:00 Panel Discussion: Running Support Groups for Targeted Parents: Lessons Learned  
Brian Ludmer (Moderator), Phillip Hendrix, Cindy Hirsch, and Anna Tivade
- 10:00 - 10:15 BREAK
- 10:15 - 11:00 Parental Alienation in U.S. Courts: 1985–2018  
Demosthenes Lorandos
- 11:00 - 12:00 Panel Discussion: Parental Alienation in International Courts  
Ashish Joshi (Moderator), Lena Hellblom Sjögren, Jorge Guerra González, and Nick Child
- 12:00 - 1:30 LUNCH
- 1:30 - 2:30 Panel: Historical Highlights  
William Bernet (Moderator), Wilfrid von Boch-Galhau, Demosthenes Lorandos, Stephen Morrison, Olga Odinetz, Louis Pilla, and Mark D. Roseman
- 2:30 - 3:30 Panel Discussion: Parental Alienation and the Media  
Su Keenan (Moderator), Ginger Gentile, and William McGee
- 3:30 - 3:45 BREAK
- 3:45 - 4:30 Top Ten Strategies to Conquer Parental Alienation  
David Curl
- 4:30 - 5:00 Closing Remarks  
Amy J. L. Baker and Tom Janssen

## Additional Activities Open to All Attendees

### Evening of Day Two (Friday, September 13)

- 5:15 - 6:15 **Role Playing of Memorabilia Intervention**, which occurs during the Turning Points 4 Families reunification program. This intervention is the icebreaker and has been highly effective in jump-starting the reconnection with the targeted parent. Linda Gottlieb, the director of Turning Points 4 Families, will present this activity.
- 7:00 **Movie Night: *Erasing Family***. This documentary tells the stories of children, siblings, and parents who are currently experiencing alienation and dives deep into the lives of young adults who are in the process of reconciliation with their parents, offering potential solutions for healing and change from legal and mental health experts. See [www.erasingfamily.org](http://www.erasingfamily.org). Ginger Gentile, the director of *Erasing Family*, will present and discuss the film.

### During Lunch of Day Three (Saturday, September 14)

- 12:00 - 1:30 **Media Fair:** Books and artwork will be discussed at various tables in the lunch area. The presenters include ...

**Wilfrid von Boch-Galhau**, author of *Parental Alienation and Parental Alienation Syndrome: A Serious Form of Psychological Child Abuse*.

**Ginger Gentile**, director of the feature documentary, *Erasing Family*.

**Susan Heitler**, author of *Prescriptions without Pills: For Relief from Depression, Anger, Anxiety and More*.

**Joan Kloth-Zanard**, author of *Where Did I Go Wrong? How Did I Miss the Signs?*

**Cara E. Koch**, author of *From Heart-break to Healing: Resolving Parental Alienation*.

**Demosthenes Lorandos and William Bernet**, editors of *Parental Alienation – Science and Law*.

**William J. McGee**, author *Half the Child: A Novel*.

**Olga Odinetz**, author of *Séparations conflictuelles et alienation parentale: Enfants en danger*.

**Louis Pilla**, editor-in-chief of *Parental Alienation International*.

**Mark D. Roseman**, author of *Preserving Family Ties, An Authoritative Guide to Understanding Divorce and Child Custody*.

**Julie Verner**, author of *The Incredible Shrinking Girl: A Divorce Story*.

**Xiajioe Zheng**, a graphic artist, develops art projects that promote healing for targeted parents.

## TITLES, PRESENTERS, AND ABSTRACTS

### DAY ONE – PLENARY SESSIONS

**Title:** How Did We Get Here? Where are We Headed?

**Presenter:** William Bernet

**Abstract:** This presentation will provide an overview of where we are as a field. Contemporary parental alienation (PA) theory resulted from a convergence of influences from family therapists, research on the suggestibility of children, child custody evaluations, court clinics, psychological testing, and hardcore psychosocial research. As an organization, the Parental Alienation Study Group (PASG) values this diversity. We also value the ability of scientific knowledge to come together from several directions toward a coherent parental alienation theory, with agreement on all the basic principles and most of the details. We also value debate and legitimate scholarly discussion, which is necessary to clarify areas of possible disagreement. For example, PASG members may not agree on the best interventions for different levels of severity of PA. We may not agree on the importance of state legislatures adopting a preference for shared parenting in child custody disputes. As an organization PASG values the integration and collaboration of individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds, education, and current roles, including mental health professionals, legal professionals, targeted parents, adult children of PA, and child and family advocates. We hope that all the participants in PASG 2019 will experience these values first hand, which means listening to a diversity of opinion—including disagreement and debate—balanced with a good deal of consensus and collaboration.

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**Title:** Introducing the Voice of the Targeted Parent into the Conference

**Presenter:** Sandra Moon Dancer

**Abstract:** In this presentation, Sandra Moon Dancer will describe the ways in which targeted parents' voices will be heard throughout the conference, including having individuals affected by parental alienation share their personal stories. This presentation will introduce this conference's new approach to integrating and focusing on the lived experiences of targeted parents and their families who are the inspiration for the conference.

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**Title:** Personal Story 1

**Presenter:** Robert Lowden

**Abstract:** Robert Lowden is a grandfather whose daughter lost her two daughters to psychological abuse/parental alienation and the quagmire of the court system. Through this experience Bob found a divide exists between an innocent perception of justice and the reality of what his family experienced. Bob will share his family's journey through Department of Child Services and beyond. His family was overwhelmed by the situation, starting with a false abuse narrative, CPS workers "believing the children," and underqualified therapists continually "validating" whatever the children said. Unfortunately, there are thousands more sharing this experience, with its diverse identifiers that are counter initiative to traditional solutions. Effective techniques must be identified and methodologies discussed for use in contacting legislators and judiciary, recognizing they are overwhelmed with problems asking

## Day One, Plenary Sessions

for attention. It is important to provide our story and parental alienation information to these officials. During the last two years of his four-year journey, Bob has made some progress in this area including meetings with individual state legislators and testifying to an Indiana legislative committee concerning changes required in the Department of Child Services to improve training and qualifications of case-workers. Recently Bob was invited to a meeting with the new Indiana State Director of Department of Child Services that included the Deputy Director of Operations and the DCS Legislative Director. Unfortunately, it is difficult to measure success of these actions but the act of helping others on this journey helps us have purpose.

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**Title:** Parental Alienation and Science: The Big Picture

**Presenter:** Amy J. L. Baker

**Abstract:** Not all children who reject a parent are alienated. It is essential for proper management and treatment of cases of child alignment that alienated children be identified and differentiated from estranged children. Dr. Baker will review the Four-Factor Model for identifying parental alienation from estrangement. According to the model, children should be considered alienated only when all four factors are present: (1) there was a prior positive attachment between the child and the now rejected parent; (2) the rejected parent did not engage in abuse or neglect or seriously deficient parenting; (3) the favored parent engaged in multiple parental alienation behaviors; and (4) the child exhibits most if not all of the behavioral manifestations of alienation. Dr. Baker will present the science underlying the elements of the model and the model itself. In doing so she will draw on research in a variety of fields including memory, attachment, child development, and child maltreatment. She will highlight what we know and do not know about parental alienation and identify areas for future research.

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**Title:** Personal Story 2

**Presenter:** Maureen MacNeill

**Abstract:** Maureen MacNeill is a Canadian journalist living in Austria. Her family was affected by parental alienation in 2016 and she continues to fight against it at the European Court level. Although her daughters became alienated and severely psychologically ill after moving to the father's, losing several years of school, social services did not intervene and the local court granted the father full custody, the mother not even a visitation right. Despite the egregious and dangerous errors on the part of the Austrian system, the mother has been able to maintain a relationship to her older daughter. This was likely made possible through a few channels: the mother informing herself about parental alienation and consulting with parental alienation experts, and the presence of bridge people. In this presentation, Maureen will highlight some of the most challenging aspects of her personal experience as well as some of the lessons she has learned.

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Day One, Plenary Sessions

**Title:** Nuts and Bolts of Effective Therapy for the Continuum of Alienation

**Presenter:** Linda Gottlieb

**Abstract:** Family systems therapy is the treatment of choice for all degrees of alienation—when its principles and interventions are precisely adhered to. The child psychiatrists who founded family therapy intervened to disrupt the “triangulation” that they had observed by decisively challenging the enmeshment between the child and the co-opting/triangulating parent to marginalize and denigrate the child’s other parent. Sound familiar? The fundamental objective of family therapy is healthy family functioning—applicable to all degrees of alienation! Healthy family functioning includes appropriate family hierarchy, growth-promoting family and individual boundaries for children at various developmental stages, civil and respectful communication among family members. Behavioral changes are required. Unfortunately, most therapists who provide reunification therapy have not been trained in family systems therapy nor, in particular, how to apply this model to alienation cases. And these therapists are further misinformed about how to handle a mildly alienated child who is being programmed by a severe, obsessed alienator. What is an alienated parent to do? What is the alienated parent’s lawyer to do? The purpose of this presentation is to describe how clinicians can and should: (1) rely on the mutual therapeutic interventions common to all degrees of alienation; (2) expeditiously make an informed estimate as to the severity of the alienation; (3) use the Patient’s Bill of Rights to hold the therapist accountable for effective treatment; and (4) use the failure of traditional models to get a court order for effective treatment.

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**Title:** Personal Story 3

**Presenter:** Joe Rabiega

**Abstract:** The purpose of this presentation is to share an experience of survival and healing as an adult child of parental alienation. Joe Rabiega will discuss the two lives he has led. For the first 20 years he was in a constant 24/7 survival struggle as his father’s “seek and destroy” weapon against his mother, her relatives, and her friends. His father truly was a cult leader who demanded that his son pledge allegiance and loyalty to him while taking out a gun and threatening suicide. The second part of his life (the past 22 years) started when he met his current wife and began the process of breaking free from his father’s control and abuse

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**Title:** Personal Story 4

**Presenter:** Cara Koch

**Abstract:** Cara Koch briefly narrates her personal story of 43 years of alienation, followed by sharing some aha! moments in her journey of inner healing after discovering the term parental alienation when she was 32 years into it. Through a major paradigm shift she was able to overcome years of shame, fear, despair, rejection, and stark emptiness that caused her to lose her sense of purpose. She reveals how she overcame her persistent depression and came to understand the nature of parental alienation and why her son erased her from his life. She has not totally given up hope that their relationship will be healed, but she is no longer holding her breath for that to happen.

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**Title:** Parental Alienation Doesn't Always Make Sense

**Presenter:** Steven G. Miller

**Abstract:** Among professionals who specialize in child alignment, it is well known that many aspects of parental alienation are highly counterintuitive. Examples include how to distinguish alienation from estrangement, how to identify hybrid cases, and how to treat alienated children. Other examples abound. What's more, the use of the word counterintuitive is more than a warning for professionals (and others) to be careful. Rather, it is a warning that no matter how careful professionals might be, those who do not specialize in this area will almost always make major errors—often catastrophic errors—with respect to diagnosis, causation, treatment, and prognosis. This is true not only for the mental health professionals who evaluate, manage, and treat such cases but also for the legal professionals who evaluate, manage, and litigate them. This presentation will highlight some of the most common counterintuitive issues and related errors.

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**Title:** Parental Alienation: The Legal Landscape and Pitfalls

**Presenters:** Ashish Joshi and Demosthenes Lorandos

**Abstract:** The debate is over: There is no doubt that parental alienation exists. The detractors continue to create a smokescreen of “controversy” both in the professional literature and in courts. But an overwhelming number of family courts around the country have accepted the notion of parental alienation and have acknowledged it as a significant factor in their decisions modifying custody and providing other appropriate intervention. Regardless of how one labels the phenomenon—call it parental alienation, “brainwashing,” or “programming”—American family courts have come to a conclusion that whether or not a psychological “syndrome” exists, parental alienation clearly does. As a New York trial judge recently wrote: “Anybody old enough to drink coffee knows that embittered parties can and do manipulate their children.” This presentation will provide an overview of how American courts have wrestled with the concept of parental alienation and how the judges, when presented with proper and compelling evidence, have ordered appropriate interventions including but not limited to a change of custody, specialized mental health intervention programs, financial sanctions, and even incarceration in the most serious cases.

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**Title:** Personal Story 5

**Presenter:** Mark Drejza

**Abstract:** As a targeted parent, parental alienation is a confusing experience to say the least. However, as with many conditions, going from recognizing the symptoms and understanding what they mean to being able to take action can be quite a journey. Knowing that this family dynamic is a thing and has a name is the first step. However, the journey does not end when the realization sinks in that the majority of family services and legal processes cannot readily help the situation. This presentation is about one father's journey to understand what was happening so rapidly to his family so he could attempt manage and hopefully counter the parental alienation dynamic occurring. Without the help of those services and

Day Two, Parent Track

systems which were completely ignorant or impotent to deal with the problem, this father describes the emotions experienced and explains how he worked to empower himself and ultimately reunite with his now fully adult children.

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**Questions and Answers:** Dialogue between the Audience and Today’s Presenters

**Panel Discussion:** Demosthenes Lorandos (Moderator), Amy J. L. Baker, William Bernet, Linda Gottlieb, Ashish Joshi, and Steven G. Miller

**Abstract:** In this panel, each of the parental alienation specialists who presented earlier in the day will be available to answer questions from the audience. Throughout the day, the audience will be provided with index cards to write their questions on and selected questions will be presented to the panelists.

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## DAY TWO – PARENT TRACK

**Title:** The Four Bodies of Consciousness: Critical Awareness and the Importance of Balance for the Targeted Parent

**Presenter:** Sandra Moon Dancer

**Abstract:** Targeted parents are challenged daily by significant emotional, legal, financial, physical, and complex personal hurdles. How can targeted parents maintain the strength, focus, and stamina required to address these ongoing challenges? This presentation will offer an overview of the four bodies of consciousness: mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. Awareness of these four aspects—and the essential practical skills they provide—enable targeted parents to hold the vision of well-being for themselves and their family, and to be the bridge for their children to a balanced and healthy life.

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**Title:** Shaming: A Powerful Tool in the Alienator’s Toolbox

**Presenter:** Margaret Jones

**Abstract:** Shaming is an effective tool in the alienator’s toolbox. Consequences of shaming can include isolation of family members from each other, reduction of independent thought and decision-making, as well as poor self-esteem. It can be an efficient tool of control and abuse, for once the alienator introduces shaming, targeted family members may begin to internally shame themselves. Internalized shame is an invisible weapon that can be used to control, manipulate, and silence family members. This presentation will introduce and define the concept of shaming and the connected emotion of shame. Margaret will show how shaming functions as a critical weapon of family violence in the framework of a family violence model of parental alienation; explain how shaming, shame, and their effects can be identified by children and targeted parents, as well as by professionals in the field; and explain an effective clinical approach for addressing shame and its powerful effects on family members.

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**Title:** Forgiveness: The Key to a Better Tomorrow

**Presenter:** Chris Andexler

**Abstract:** Raising children is about building a legacy, but what happens when a high-conflict divorce or separation involves one parent trying to alienate the child from the other parent? It is often said by parents engaging in alienation behaviors, “I am doing this for the kids,” but what if that is not true? How should the targeted parent respond when confronted with the fact that their child is being hurt and misused? Is there a path where both parents can focus again on the legacy after a broken relationship? This presentation will focus on forgiveness as the road that leads to the healthy future of alienated children and, if implemented correctly, can be a tool used to improve all relationships. The experience of being a targeted parent is a difficult one in which to have forgiveness. One of the greatest challenges, and opportunities, of being a targeted parent is to reconcile with the hurts and violations that the alienating parent has caused others. This presentation will explore the importance of forgiveness in parental alienation and how forgiveness can be applied as an example for our children.

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**Title:** Legal Panel Discussion: Preparing Your Case and Withstanding Cross-Examination

**Panel Discussion:** Shazia Nagamia Sparkman (Moderator), Andrew Bossory, and Demosthenes Lorandos

**Abstract:** If a targeted parent has a child under the age of 18 there is a chance that they will or have gone to court at some point to defend their parenting time, fight for a fair custody arrangement, and/or make the case that their family is affected by parental alienation. Being on the witness stand is a unique experience that requires a specific set of skills that many targeted parents have not been trained in. The court has its own highly specific set of rules and guidelines that need to be followed and which can often interfere with the targeted parent’s making their case as best they can. In this panel, legal professionals will explain some principles of being an effective witness and will help prepare targeted parents for the direct and cross-examination process.

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**Title:** Can We Force “Spontaneous” Reunification? Systemic Therapy with Parental Alienation

**Presenters:** Shuly Megged and Amittai Megged

**Abstract:** Treatment approaches that attempt to reconnect alienated parents with their children sometimes create this through an effort to effect changes by means of monitoring it so that it will start to occur and continue to evolve. Try to imagine a therapeutic approach that induces “spontaneous” change in parents, following which children reestablish a relationship with their target parent, without the effort or supervision of either parent, professionals or courts. We have recently started to develop an approach to treat alienated parents using principles from systemic and strategic therapy, and from a philosophy that places “relational ethics” at the center of therapy. Our assumption is that difficulties between a child and its targeted parent are not related to this dyad, but rather express the unresolved conflict between the divorced couple. In light of this, we do not deal at all with the relationship between target parent and child, but start immediately to confront the unresolved marital conflict. Our

Day Two, Parent Track

approach makes extensive use of confrontational questions, paradoxes, absurdities, stories, and metaphors. In co-therapy we confront couples with the unethical use of their children to avenge or punish the other parent. We find that since starting to treat families this way, our treatments have become lighter, more creative, and much more effective. In a number of cases, we succeeded in renewing a relationship spontaneously within a few days. This presentation will provide an overview and offer numerous examples of this technique.

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**Title:** Promising Recipes: Active Ingredients of Effective Outcomes in More Traditional Reunification Interventions

**Panel Discussion:** Linda Gottlieb (Moderator), Colleen Murray, and Nick Woodall

**Abstract:** Targeted parents will have an opportunity to join the clinical track for this panel discussion of the active ingredients of various clinical approaches to working with alienation cases.

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**Questions and Answers:** Exploring Challenges and Opportunities with Targeted Parent Presenters

**Panel Discussion:** Sandra Moon Dancer (Moderator), Mark Drejza, Cara Koch, Robert Lowden, and Maureen MacNeill

**Abstract:** The targeted parents who presented their personal stories during Day One will comprise the panel and the audience will have an opportunity to ask them questions about their experience as targeted parents, what they learned along the way, what advice they have to support others in meeting the challenges of being a targeted parent, and how to create new opportunities moving forward.

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**Title:** Targeted Parent Insights for Impact

**Presenter:** Sandra Moon Dancer

**Abstract:** Sandra Moon Dancer will lead discussion groups with the purpose of gathering key feedback from conference participants. Targeted parents will reflect, share, and identify themes and new insights gained throughout the conference, to then be shared with the full audience on Day Three.

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## DAY TWO – LEGAL TRACK

**Title:** First Things First: It’s a MISTAKE to Think Like a Lawyer When Representing Targeted Parents

**Presenters:** Steven G. Miller and Ashish Joshi

**Abstract:** The field of parental alienation continues to evolve—scientifically, clinically, and legally. As it matures, professionals who specialize in this area have come to understand that many aspects of this phenomenon are not as straightforward as they might seem, especially to those who lack a deep understanding of the many counterintuitive issues. Indeed, warnings by specialists that the field is “profoundly counterintuitive” (“highly” does not do it justice) are typically misunderstood—mistaken for reminders to “be careful,” as if one can safely tiptoe through a minefield by treading lightly. *This misses the scientific point that if a discipline is counterintuitive that means one should not rely on intuition—including professional intuition—unless it is highly sophisticated, specialist-level intuition, coupled with proper scientific analysis.* That is all the more true in fields such as mental health and law that often invoke simplistic heuristic thinking (“Back off and they’ll come to you.”) and deficient models such as the High-Conflict Model (“If only these parents loved their children as much as they hate each other.”) for understanding complex clinical problems. Indeed, when dealing with alienation, those who rely on intuition are likely to make serious errors. Although this is becoming well-known with respect to the clinical issues, it is less well-known with respect to the legal issues. Consequently, this presentation will focus on a number of legal issues that are likely to be profoundly counterintuitive to even the best attorneys unless they specialize in the legal aspects of parental alienation and related matters.

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**Title:** The Science Behind False Allegations of Child Abuse

**Presenters:** Shawn Wygant and Ben Burgess

**Abstract:** False allegations of child abuse create significant challenges in cases of suspected parental alienation. Helping triers of fact overcome these challenges involves assisting them in understanding what the science says regarding: (1) how fictitious allegations of abuse can be created within an alienating parent–child relationship; (2) how false memories of abuse can be induced in children who are exposed to alienating strategies and brainwashing techniques; (3) what happens to children when courts fail to resolve abuse allegations in a timely manner; and (4) what forms of intervention courts can take to stop the formation and maintenance of false allegations of abuse. This presentation unpacks the empirical scientific literature and relevant case law concerning false memory induction of abuse in alienated children as well as the techniques most frequently used by alienating parents to manufacture false narratives of abuse that casts them in the role of rescuer, the target parent in the role of villain, and the alienated child in the role of victim.

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**Title:** Unique Challenges for Targeted Parents: How Attorneys Can Use Parent Coaching to Help Clients

**Presenters:** Randy Flood and Brian Hart

## Day Two, Legal Track

**Abstract:** Alienators win custody of children most of the time. This workshop will teach attorneys and targeted parents how specialized parental alienation coaches increase their chances to retain their custody and emotional relationships, while also saving money by reducing the number of court dates. Targeted parents are being attacked and are in a family crisis. This trauma and enormous stress are disabling due to fear, hurt, outrage, and bewilderment. Alienators have many advantages as they have been preparing for this battle for years, they perceive their life as dependent on winning, they don't recognize or care about damaging the children (or the other parent), and they don't follow any rules. Alienators are effective at setting up traps and tricking targeted parents to react in ways that strengthen the legal case against them (including restraining orders and criminal charges) and strengthen and solidify the children's loyalty contract against them. Coaches assist with social science research, client management, teaching smart responses and proactive strategies to counter the alienator's tactics and narratives that cause the children's hurtful and hateful rejection, and create "negative advocate" therapists, school officials, extended family, neighbors, and other professionals. Coaches assist in trial strategy, and relevant evidence identification, collection, and formatting. Parental education helps with coping and for the processes of forensic evaluations, parent coordination, litigation, and testimony. Winning child access in court is only half the battle, coaches also help prevent the indoctrination of the child to reject a parent they love—winning the heart and mind too.

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**Title:** How to Manage Children's Counsel, Child Protection Workers, Police, Parenting Coordinators, Therapists, and Evaluators

**Presenter:** Brian Ludmer

**Abstract:** Parental alienation and high-conflict custody cases are complicated by the interactions with non-family actors who can wield enormous influence on outcomes. Sorting out truth from fiction and managing the processes and influences of these key players are essential in ensuring a favorable outcome to the case. This presentation will examine the typical and atypical roles played by others and provide practical and legal (procedural and substantive) guidance on how to manage these processes. Areas of focus include: children's counsel, child protection authorities, police, parenting coordinators, therapists, and custody evaluators.

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**Title:** Legal Challenges in Dealing with Parental Alienation: A View from the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, and Sweden

**Panel Discussion:** Ashish Joshi (Moderator), Marie-France Carlier, Jorge Guerra González, Lena Hellblom Sjögren, and Karen Woodall

**Abstract:** The panel members will give a brief presentation on their experiences in dealing with parental alienation cases in their respective jurisdictions: Belgium, United Kingdom, Germany, and Sweden. Their presentation will discuss the unique challenges and opportunities that confront the professionals—social workers, mental health professionals, judges—when dealing with parental alienation cases in these European jurisdictions. The panel will open the floor for questions and discussion following their presentation.

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**Title:** Proactive Management of Parental Alienation Cases in Israeli Courts: A Novel Approach

**Presenter:** Philip Marcus

**Abstract:** Judge (Retired) Philip Marcus of the Jerusalem Family Court will present a pilot scheme that is currently in practice in the Tel Aviv Family Court for cases where parental alienation has been alleged. Judge Marcus will discuss how these cases are not only referred to a specialist judge in a fast-track mode, but also enjoy unique features, including expedited deadlines for responsive pleadings and a hearing, reversal of burden of proof (where the alleged alienator has to prove that contact failure is a result of the alienated parent’s conduct), judicial fact-finding on the presence of PA, immediate intervention and remedial steps when required, and, last but not least, sanctions for non-compliance with court orders. The presentation will show how the scheme works and how it results in savings of court time and expense for the parties, by using case management techniques without changing court rules.

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**Title:** Preparing to Confront the Adverse Mental Health Professional(s)

**Presenters:** Andrew Bossory and Cory Sprunger

**Abstract:** Alienating parents often are not alone in their campaign to undermine the relationship between a child and the target parent. Frequently, they procure the assistance of mental health professionals to further their goals. Sometimes, this triangulation of professionals may take place without the professional ever truly knowing what has happened and are duped into believing they are “protecting” a child from a dangerous parent. The harm an uninformed and manipulated mental health professional can cause to a target parent’s case is tremendous, particularly with fact-finders who are not well versed in the complex and far-reaching strategies employed by alienators. This presentation will provide guidance for counsel of target parents who may be confronted with a mental health professional supporting the alienator’s agenda (regardless of whether that support is intentional or unintentional). An uninformed mental health professional working alongside the alienator—if left unchecked—can cause irreparable harm to a case, particularly if the therapist is savvy enough to use a buzzword such as “best interests” in his or her recommendations. Strategies for discovery of records, handling claims of privilege to shield records from the target parent, and weaving that information into useful examination are tools necessary for counsel to have to effectively engage an adverse mental health professional.

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**Title:** Brave New World: What a Revamped Family Law System Would Look Like

**Presenter:** Catherine MacWillie

**Abstract:** The problems with the family court system are known to many, especially families affected by parental alienation. Favored parents lie in court, many professionals are uncaring and/or ineffectual, restraining orders and allegations of abuse can be used as weapons not shields. Often, the courts make everything worse instead of better. In this presentation, ten suggestions for improving the family court process are offered as practical and doable things targeted parents and their advocates can be asking for right now, using better business practices and without the requirement to pass major legislation in each state.

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**Questions and Answers:** Dialogue between Attorneys and Audience Members

**Panel of Today's Presenters:** Ashish Joshi (Moderator), Andrew Bossory, Brian Ludmer, and Cory Sprunger

**Abstract:** In this panel, some of the attorneys who presented earlier in the day will be available to answer questions from the audience. Throughout the day, the audience will be provided with index cards to write their questions on and selected questions will be presented to the panelists.

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## DAY TWO – CLINICAL TRACK

**Title:** Holding the Alienating Parent Accountable to the Court to Relinquish Alienating Behaviors: Imposing Time Limits

**Panel Discussion:** Colleen Murray (Moderator), Linda Gottlieb, Joan Kloth-Zanard, and Amy Van Gunst

**Abstract:** There are several reasons why traditional reunification therapy is contraindicated for the treatment of severe cases of parental alienation and most moderate cases. One fundamental reason is that the alienating parent, who is the cause of the alienation, is usually let off the hook while attention is paid only to the symptom, that is, the “relationship problem” between the child and the alienated parent. Such an approach is rarely, if ever, successful. Each panelist in this presentation will discuss an intervention tool intended to hold the alienating parent accountable for having caused the alienation and which requires the alienating parent to make prompt, remedial behavioral changes.

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**Title:** Nipping Alienation in the Bud: Wouldn't It be Lovely If We Went Out of Business?

**Presenter:** Walter Camos

**Abstract:** Alienating behaviors have become more prevalent within families going through separation and divorce. The child may distance or reject a parent due to one parent influencing the child against the other. The literature may suggest a need for specialized treatment protocols for rejection cases, but empirically supported models are difficult to find; therefore, many utilize their own clinical methods. It has been common to diagnose and pathologize parents engaging in these alienating behaviors, but it is believed here that this brings about defensiveness, which is detrimental to reunification. The goal of Beneficently-Enhanced-Agency Reunification (BEAR) Therapy is to bring together and facilitate quality contact time between child and parent, maintaining the respect and dignity of all parties, while minimizing the need for defensiveness, through the avoidance of terms with negative connotations. “Beneficence” is doing good for the parties and is a fundamental ethical principle for mental health professionals. Treating the parties with respect and dignity, with no fault and no blame, the therapist beneficently guides the family down a path that avoids the need for adjudication. “Agency” as used here, is the ability of a family to take responsibility for itself, make appropriate choices in the child's best

## Day Two, Clinical Track

interest, form consensual agreement to better the current circumstances, and take the initiative to act on those choices. Whereas Agency is empowering for the family, deferring to a court is dis-empowering. The most severe cases, where neither BEAR Therapy nor any other therapy can help, may ultimately require environmental modification through court order.

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**Title:** Crazy Making Issues in Alienation: Professional Alienation Collusion

**Panel Discussion:** Linda Gottlieb (Moderator), Ben Burgess, Randy Flood, Amy Van Gunst, and Shawn Wygant

**Abstract:** Due to the numerous counterintuitive issues arising in alienation cases, one profoundly deleterious result is “unwitting professional collusion with the alienating parent,” thereby exacerbating the alienation—often beyond repair. Non-specialists in alienation are particularly susceptible to becoming co-opted by the alienating parent, who presents well, while the alienated parent, who is a trauma victim, may present poorly. This problem cannot be overstated. We have experienced all too many cases in which a mental health professional had contributed to “a climate of fear, hatred, and terror” that led to a substantial negative impact on the relationship between the child and alienated parent and supported the child’s “refusal and resistance to parenting time with good, loving, and safe parents.” This panel will provide tips to alienated parents and to their lawyers about how to negotiate the anti-therapeutic “triangulating trap.” Real case examples will be presented in which third party collusion resulted in catastrophic results, such as “the death of one or more family members.” “Manufactured family scripts” incorporating bizarre, fabricated, and sadistic revisionist history that effectively coopted the professional will be discussed.

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**Title:** Can We Force “Spontaneous” Reunification? Systemic Therapy with Parental Alienation

**Presenters:** Shuly Megged and Amittai Megged

**Abstract:** Treatment approaches that attempt to reconnect alienated parents with their children sometimes create this through an effort to effect changes by means of monitoring it so that it will start to occur and continue to evolve. Try to imagine a therapeutic approach that induces “spontaneous” change in parents, following which children reestablish a relationship with their target parent, without the effort or supervision of either parent, professionals or courts. We have recently started to develop an approach to treat alienated parents using principles from systemic and strategic therapy, and from a philosophy that places “relational ethics” at the center of therapy. Our assumption is that difficulties between a child and its targeted parent are not related to this dyad, but rather express the unresolved conflict between the divorced couple. In light of this, we do not deal at all with the relationship between target parent and child, but start immediately to confront the unresolved marital conflict. Our approach makes extensive use of confrontational questions, paradoxes, absurdities, stories and metaphors. In co-therapy we confront couples with the unethical use of their children to avenge or punish the other parent. We find that since starting to treat families this way, our treatments have become lighter, more creative, and much more effective. In a number of cases, we succeeded in renewing a relationship spontaneously within a few days. This presentation will provide an overview and offer numerous examples of this technique.

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**Title:** Promising Recipes: Active Ingredients of Effective Outcomes in More Traditional Reunification Interventions

**Panel Discussion:** Linda Gottlieb (Moderator), Colleen Murray, and Nick Woodall

**Abstract:** Treating parental alienation using traditional reunification models often presents professionals and the courts with significant challenges. Effective treatment is further complicated by the frequent pattern of false allegations of child harm or abuse that are typically alleged in alienation cases. Two highly skillful therapists will share their unique, effective interventions (or the active ingredients) of their therapeutic interventions. One panelist will introduce differential assessment protocols that will enable discovery of why the child is rejecting. Interventions will be identified that will bring about the best outcomes for the child by challenging the pathological enmeshment between the alienating parent and child. In other words, the audience will learn techniques that disrupt the dysfunctional family dynamics of boundary violations, identification with the aggressor, and pathological splitting. Another panelist will present a method that will assist therapists to mitigate criticism and impeachment of their findings and opinions. This method—video recording of interviews and treatment—serves numerous purposes. The method eliminates the claim of clinician subjectivity, facilitates assessment and insight, enables more effective follow-up sessions, mitigates therapeutic stagnation, substitutes for the elusive paper trail, and provides incontrovertible support for the clinician.

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**Title:** Assessments in the 21st Century: Evidence-Based Meets Expert System Technology

**Presenters:** Lisa Rothfus, Eric Rothfus, and Loretta Maase

**Abstract:** Conducting a parental alienation assessment can be a daunting task for clinicians because of the lack of a standardized process. This workshop will introduce a standardized model that incorporates the generally accepted criteria for diagnosing parental alienation. Incorporating the work of Clawar and Rivlin, Gottlieb, Baker, Gardner, Miller, and others, this model includes a new online assessment tool that provides a step-by-step process for conducting a research-based alienation assessment and generating a customizable report.

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**Title:** Treating Adult Alienated Children: Dealing with the Pain of Visiting the Sins of the Adults on the Children—and Grandchildren

**Panel Discussion:** Linda Gottlieb (Moderator), Joe Rabiaga, Suzanne Spencer Abel, and Karen Woodall

**Abstract:** Research reveals that adult alienated children suffer in very unique ways—ways that include a strong chance of becoming alienated from their own children. The interminable pain follows adult-child victims from a traumatic alienated childhood into a traumatic adulthood, a seemingly endless transgenerational trauma repetition. As helping professionals, unique, creative skills are needed in order to meaningfully serve this “special population.” This panel discussion will focus on (1) the “learning skills to live with acceptance and peace” from the perspective of an alienated child who tragically became alienated from her own children and grandchildren and now runs a support program; (2) a complex, here and now, non-self-judgmental treatment approach to healing adult victims of alienation by a

Day Two, Research Track

clinician who was an alienated child; (3) the healing and reintegration of the “split state of mind” of the adult child victim of alienation by a therapist with 30 years’ experience working successfully with reunification of children.

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**Title:** Common Clinical Mistakes

**Presenter:** Joshua Coleman

**Abstract:** Estranged or alienated parents often come into therapy with a fear, if not expectation, of the therapist blaming them for their situation. This defensive posture may make it harder for the therapist to establish rapport and to identify ways that the client may be contributing to a deteriorated or deteriorating situation with their adult child such as expressing anger at the other parent, placing the children in loyalty binds, or refusing to repair the damage caused by their own reactions. In this presentation we will review common mistakes that clinicians make in the initial interview and suggest guidelines to establish rapport, alliance, and commitment to do the often challenging steps required of a reconciliation.

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**DAY TWO – RESEARCH TRACK**

**Title:** Stories from the Family and Interpersonal Relationships Laboratory in Tasmania: A Summary of the Forgotten Families Project

**Presenter:** Mandy Matthewson

**Abstract:** The aim of this presentation is to summarize the outcomes of three research projects completed in the Family and Interpersonal Research Lab at the University of Tasmania. These projects consist of an international sample of alienated children, parents, and grandparents who described in detail their experience of parental alienation. All three generations described themes of grief and loss, mental health difficulties, family violence, and interactions with services that have little understanding of their plight. Some of the challenges faced by researchers in the lab and our solutions to these challenges will also be described.

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**Research Brief:** Prevalence of Adults Who Are the Targets of Parental Alienating Behaviors and Their Impact: Results from Three National Polls

**Presenter:** Jennifer Harman

**Abstract:** Estimating the prevalence of parental alienation is challenging because not all children who are exposed to parental alienating behaviors become alienated. The purpose of the current study was to determine the proportion of adults who indicate being alienated from a child using three national on-line panels that are representative of adults from the United States (two polls) and Canada (one poll)

## Day Two, Research Track

and to determine the mental health impact of parental alienating behaviors. Results from the first two polls indicate that the prevalence of parents who feel they are being alienated from their children is higher than originally estimated: 35.5% (of 273) in the U.S. and 32% (of 397) in Canada. Using another means of assessment for the third poll, we found that 39.1% (of 594) of parents in the U.S. are the non-reciprocating targets of parental alienating behaviors, which is over 22 million parents and confirms previous estimates that did not differentiate between reciprocating and non-reciprocating parents. Of these, 6.7% of the parents had children who were moderately to severely alienated, which is at least 1.3% of the U.S. population of children. We also found alienated parents had greater levels of depression, trauma symptoms, and risk for suicide. Discussion will center on the ramifications of these findings for researchers and practitioners, and the need to differentiate between families in which parental alienating behaviors are reciprocal (typically resulting in loyalty conflicts) versus non-reciprocal (typically resulting in parental alienation).

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### **Research Brief:** Confusion and Consensus over Definitions

**Presenter:** William Bernet

**Abstract:** One of the most frequent criticisms of parental alienation—even by believers in the concept—is that “the lack of consensus on the definitions of alienation and the use of varying nonstandardized measures limit the ability of researchers to conduct methodologically sound research in this area.” In this workshop, definitions are proposed for the following terms: parental alienation theory; parental alienation; alienating behaviors; mild, moderate, and severe levels of parental alienation; mild, moderate, and severe levels of alienating behavior. Also, the Five-Factor Model for the identification or diagnosis of parental alienation, which consists of: (1) the child manifests contact refusal; (2) the presence of a prior positive relationship between the child and the now rejected parent; (3) the absence of abuse or neglect or seriously deficient parenting on the part of the now rejected parent; (4) the use of multiple alienating behaviors on the part of the favored parent; and (5) the exhibition of many of the eight behavioral manifestations of alienation by the child. Attempts will be made to reach consensus regarding the terminology and definitions.

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### **Two Research Briefs:** Attitudes of Abused Children: Do They Exhibit the Eight Behavioral Manifestations of Parental Alienation?

**Presenters:** Amy J. L. Baker and Steven G. Miller

**Abstract:** A survey study was conducted in which over 300 mental health professionals with experience with physically abused children answered a series of questions about the actions and attitudes of abused children towards their maltreating parents. This presentation will present two sets of analyses. In the first, the items on the survey will be looked as either attachment-enhancing or attachment-disrupting and analyses will be presented to address the hypothesis that abused children will be more likely to exhibit attachment enhancing than attachment-disrupting behaviors. In the second set of analyses, the hypothesis will be tested that abused children do not exhibit the 8 behavioral manifestations of parental alienation. The findings are presented in the context of child maltreatment theory in which abused children become “bonded to the abuser” and in light of the Four-Factor Model of parental alienation.

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**Title:** What are the Pressing Research Questions in the Field?

**Panel Discussion:** Jennifer Harman (Moderator), Mary Alvarez, and Stephen Morrison

**Abstract:** The panelists and the audience members will explore the pressing issues and research questions for the field of parental alienation.

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**Research Brief:** Current Research Activities and Programming for Mild and Moderate Parent Rejection

**Presenters:** Mary Alvarez, Jennifer Harman, and Christine Turner

**Abstract:** There is a growing body of research concerning parental alienation in the severe range, but there is relatively little research beyond descriptions of the behavioral characteristics of children considered to be in the mild or moderate range of parent rejection. Resetting the Family was founded in order to promote the science and research on mild/moderate parent rejection or alienation, as well as to create educational programming based upon what we understand to date about parents and children for whom it has been determined that the parent rejection is in the mild to moderate range. The program is educational for both parents and children and utilizes a variety of modalities that focus on perception, problem-solving, critical thinking skills, and new skills acquisition.

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**Title:** Passing a *Daubert* Hearing

**Presenter:** Demosthenes Lorandos

**Abstract:** In this presentation and demonstration, a brief history of the *Daubert* ruling will be provided along with a discussion of the key elements of a *Daubert* hearing. Examples of how to answer questions pertaining to the scientific foundation of parental alienation theory will be offered. There will be an opportunity for the audience members to practice and to get feedback from the presenter about how to handle particularly challenging questions on the stand.

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**Research Brief:** Can Alienating Parents be Identified by Displays of Emotion?

**Presenter:** Heleen Koppejan

**Abstract:** In this study we examined whether regular divorces can be distinguished from high-conflict divorces by measuring the intensity of emotions that divorced parents report when thinking about their ex-partner. We recruited two groups of parents; n = 136 in a regular divorce, and n = 191 in a high-conflict divorce. Based on the existing literature, we predicted that parents in high-conflict divorces experience more intense emotions than parents in regular divorces; especially emotions that motivate social distancing (contempt, disgust, anger, hatred, and rage) and emotions that impair self-regulation (fear, shame, guilt, and sadness). Given that some of the data were nested within couples, we conducted multilevel modelling analyses and found our hypothesis confirmed. Next, we examined the relation

Day Two, Research Track

between emotions of divorced parents and co-parenting concerns and found a significant interaction effect between divorce group (regular vs. high-conflict divorce) and co-parenting concerns, but only so on social distancing emotions. Parents in a high-conflict divorce reported more co-parenting concerns than parents in a regular divorce, but the interaction showed that this was surprisingly so especially when social distancing emotions were low. These findings suggest that measuring the intensity of social distancing emotions may serve as an early screening tool, identifying parents at risk for a high-conflict divorce, and through this baseline, repeated measures may also serve as follow-up for determining the effectiveness of interventions. Future longitudinal research, may provide insight in the causality and direction of the association between social distancing emotions and co-parenting concerns.

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**Research Brief:** Using the Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire in Parental Alienation Research

**Presenter:** Joan Kloth-Zanard

**Abstract:** The Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) is a widely used measure of a child’s (or adult child’s) experience with each parent. The measure has been used throughout the world to capture the extent to which a child experiences love and acceptance from each parent. Scores on the PARQ have been found to be reliable and valid through hundreds of studies of children and adults in the US and abroad. This presentation will provide some basic information about the composition and use of the PARQ as well as a brief presentation of how the measure has been used in research specifically in the field of parental alienation. In one such study, the PARQ was administered to alienated children, neglected children, children in intact homes, and children of divorce. In that study the PARQ was used to measure splitting (the extent to which a child idealizes one parent and demonizes the other). The findings strongly supported the notion that alienated children would exhibit higher rates of splitting than children in any of the other three groups including children who were neglected by a parent. The presentation will also explore and discuss ideas for future studies in the field of parental alienation in which the PARQ measure would be a valuable tool.

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**Title:** Discussion: Involving the Next Generation of Researchers and Funders

**Presenter:** Stephen Morrison

**Abstract:** In this group discussion, the moderator will lead the participants in large and/or small group activities to help identify how to attract and engage the next generation of researchers and funders to the field.

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## DAY THREE – PLENARY SESSIONS

**Title:** Running Support Groups for Targeted Parents: Lessons Learned

**Panel Discussion:** Brian Ludmer (Moderator), Phillip Hendrix, Cindy Hirsch, and Anna Tivade

**Abstract:** Three leaders of parental alienation support groups (New Jersey, California, and Colorado) will share their experiences, highlighting the challenges and opportunities for those seeking to provide support to targeted parents.

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**Title:** Parental Alienation in U.S. Courts, 1985 to 2018

**Presenter:** Demosthenes Lorandos

**Abstract:** Two hundred fifteen years ago, the first case resembling parental alienation was fought out in the courts of England. Child psychiatrist Richard Gardner published his first paper on an alienation syndrome in 1985. Since Gardner's contribution, there have been hundreds of peer-reviewed articles, chapters in scholarly books, and presentations at professional meetings. But in the last twenty-five years a meme has developed that parental alienation does not exist, and if it does, expert testimony about it cannot pass *Frye*, *Mohan* or *Daubert*. How do we reconcile this contradiction? One way to do that is to look at the legal opinions of hundreds of courts regarding this topic. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the scope and treatment of parental alienation cases in the United States. Do the courts in the United States find the construct parental alienation material in high-conflict cases? Is the construct parental alienation found to be relevant in high-conflict custody cases? Is expert evidence on the construct deemed material, probative, relevant, discussed at all, or merely mentioned? To answer these and related questions, a study was conducted to gather all cases in the U.S. in which parental alienation was mentioned, following explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria. This presentation will present the results of the analyses of the selected cases.

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**Title:** Parental Alienation in International Courts

**Panel Discussion:** Ashish Joshi (Moderator), Nick Child, Jorge Guerra Gonzalez, and Lena Hellblom Sjögren

**Abstract:** Parental alienation professionals from abroad will discuss their experiences with dealing with parental alienation cases and other legal and mental health professionals.

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**Title:** Historical Highlights

**Panel Discussion:** William Bernet (Moderator), Wilfrid von Boch-Galhau, Demosthenes Lorandos, Stephen Morrison, Olga Odinetz, Louis Pilla, and Mark D. Roseman

## Day Three, Plenary Sessions

**Abstract:** The early history of parental alienation scholarship was driven by the contributions of specific individuals, whose work occurred during 1985–2005. This panel discussion features early writers and researchers or, in some cases, their surrogates. In roughly chronological order, each panel member will briefly relate their role in the developing understanding of parental alienation. The historical figures will consist of: Richard A. Gardner (comments by Demosthenes Lorandos); Barry Bricklin (represented by Louis Pilla); Wilfrid von Boch-Galhau; David L. Levy (comments by Mark D. Roseman); John Dunne (represented by Stephen Morrison); and Olga Odinetz.

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**Title:** Parental Alienation and the Media

**Panel Discussion:** Su Keenan (Moderator), Ginger Gentile, and William McGee

**Abstract:** Parental alienation is a widespread family problem that affects children, parents, and extended family members. The effects of parental alienation are long-term and can be devastating for the both the child and the family as well as the larger society. Despite its prevalence and negative impact, there have been significant challenges in drawing attention to the problem that is commensurate with its scope and impact. This panel will explore some of those challenges and will highlight opportunities for moving forward. strategies to more effectively communicate with the media and general public will be discussed, and case studies will be presented.

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**Title:** Top Ten Strategies to Conquer Parental Alienation

**Presenter:** David Curl

**Abstract:** What is the best way to defeat parental alienation? Have you thought deeply about what are the most effective activities or strategies? What answer would you give and how can each of us best contribute? This presentation aims to create a discussion about the importance and effectiveness of some very different ways of dealing with parental alienation—from reunification programs to specialist conferences to international media—and to create a list of priorities, highlighting the most effective strategies for conquering this widespread and insidious form of psychological abuse. For three decades, research on parental alienation has discussed a range of aspects of this phenomenon including what it is, how it arises, and how it affects children or parents in the short and long term. There has been debate too about the term itself, how to define it, and about its relationship to other better-known concepts; many here are passionate—evangelical even—about telling people about it. Less emphasis, though, has been placed on the development of a coordinated, strategic approach that focuses on the best ways to minimize or eliminate parental alienation. In highlighting the importance of such a strategic approach, this presentation makes the case that a division of labor, greater coordination, and much better communication are needed if the most successful strategies are to be adopted and effectively implemented.

## INFORMATION ABOUT PRESENTERS

**Suzanne Spencer Abel, J.D.**, earned her B.A. in humanities from Penn State University and her J.D. from Widener University. She is also a candidate for her master's degree in American Studies where her work focuses on the American family. She was alienated from her father who passed away in 1991. Suzanne is the chair of the Cumberland-Perry Community Support Program where she advocates for people with mental illnesses. Suzanne resides in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, with her teenage daughter. She also has three adult children and six grandchildren from whom she is alienated. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, sewing, gardening, and traveling.

**Mary Alvarez, Ph.D.**, earned her doctorate in developmental psychology with an emphasis in cognitive and neurodevelopment from the University of Houston. She is a licensed psychologist in Texas and has both a forensic practice and a clinical practice. Dr. Alvarez codeveloped *Resetting the Family* to address mild and moderate parent rejection and she is actively conducting research on the program's efficacy as well as research to identify the early psychological and behavioral precursors that lead some children to reject a parent.

**Christopher Andexler** is a father of four children and four stepchildren. He is also the Ministry Director of Forged Together Ministries; helping marriages and families struggling with relational issues repair and strengthen their relationships and avoid divorce and custody battles and helping those through divorce find hope again. After nearly a decade of being alienated from his children, he felt it important to share his story of how he navigated through the process of parental alienation. He has written a book called *Ex's & Oh's – Dealing with and Healing from the Process of Parental Alienation* to help others through the process.

**Amy J. L. Baker, Ph.D.**, has a doctorate in developmental psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University. She has provided trainings on parental alienation and psychological maltreatment to legal and mental health professionals around the world. She is the author or co-author of over 100 articles and eight books including *Adult Children of Parental Alienation Syndrome*, *Co-parenting with a Toxic Ex*, and *Bonded to the Abuser*. She provides parent coaching for targeted parents and has worked with hundreds of parents to assist them in developing more effective interactions with their children. She has conducted seminal research on the long-term effects of parental alienation.

**William Bernet, M.D.**, a professor emeritus at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, has testified as an expert in forensic psychiatry about 300 times in 24 states. In 2007, Dr. Bernet and Judge Don R. Ash published *Children of Divorce: A Practical Guide for Parents, Therapists, Attorneys, and Judges*. Dr. Bernet edited *Parental Alienation, DSM-5, and ICD-11*, which was published in 2010. Dr. Bernet and his colleagues edited *Parental Alienation: The Handbook for Mental Health and Legal Professionals*, which was published in 2013. He was the founder and first president of the Parental Alienation Study Group.

**Wilfrid von Boch-Galhau, M.D.**, is a specialist in psychiatry, neurology, psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy since 1979. Since 1995 he was a member of the Interdisciplinary Working Group "Beratung bei Trennung und Scheidung" (Consulting during Separation and Divorce) in Würzburg, Germany. In 2002 he was one of the organizers of the International Parental Alienation Syndrome Conference in Frankfurt/Main, Germany. He is author and co-author of professional books and articles

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in international medical journals with the topics of parental alienation and parental alienation syndrome/disorder.

**Andrew M. Bossory, J.D.**, is the senior associate attorney with Ashish Joshi Attorneys and Counselors. For the past decade Andrew has developed a practice representing targeted parents in custody and parenting time disputes across the country. Andrew is a subcommittee chair with the American Bar Association Business Torts Journal, chair of the Washtenaw County Bar Association commercial litigation section, a contributor to the Institute for Continuing Legal Education, and a member of the Michigan and various other Federal bar associations. Andrew presents and writes frequently on a variety of topics including discovery, commercial, and domestic litigation.

**Barry Bricklin, Ph.D.**, served on the faculty and/or lectured at Jefferson Medical College, Hahnemann Medical College, Widener University, Temple University, and Johns Hopkins University, teaching psychotherapeutic and diagnostic procedures. His career spanned being a stock boy at a major department store, working at a detective agency, selling houses, running city owned recreation centers, and establishing a treatment program for difficult teenagers, based on maintaining automobiles and motorcycles. He authored a wide variety of child custody assessment tests and methods.

**Ben Burgess, M.A.**, obtained his degree in psychology from Western Michigan University and is now a practicing psychologist with the Fountain Hill Center for Counseling and Consultation. Since 2006, his primary focus has been on providing services to individuals and families experiencing high-conflict divorce and separation. In addition to individual and family counseling, Ben provides comprehensive evaluations, such as custody and parenting time evaluations and parenting capacity evaluations, that help individuals, families, and courts make informed decisions. Through a variety of tools, including psychological testing, he helps people better understand their emotional landscape and identify strategies for negotiating obstacles.

**Walter Camos, M.S., L.P.C., NBCCH**, is a private practice therapist in Lafayette, Louisiana. He has an undergraduate and two graduate degrees in psychology. He worked at the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals for many years and, in addition to his general practice, helps court-involved families in the Acadiana area with reconciliation and reunification therapy. He has done work for several judicial districts.

**Marie-France Carlier** was appointed judge in the Dinant First Instance Court in Belgium in 2003 and Juvenile Court judge in 2007. Passionate about her new position, she quickly reported on the lack of rapid and effective responses by the judicial system to parental separation. She proposed to her colleagues and the Bar to launch a great challenge: adapting the Cochem practice in Dinant, which became official in 2012. She is also one of the founders of the Interdisciplinary Family–Youth Commission to build bridges between family-related stakeholders to improve the Consensus model and she is one of the coaching leaders in parental alienation for judges and prosecutors.

**Nick Child, B.Sc., MBChB, MRCPsych, M.Phil.**, retired in 2003 from a career as a NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service community-based psychiatrist in Edinburgh and Lanarkshire, Scotland. Until 2016 he worked in the voluntary sector in a family therapy team in Edinburgh. He met a remarkable client, now colleague. No client should ever have to teach their therapist first in order to get help. This client mailed *Adult Children of Parental Alienation* with his request to be seen. Nick discovered his

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culpable ignorance about parental alienation. He has since used his limited energy and talent to read, think, write, advise, network, and campaign, rather than direct clinical or court work.

**Joshua Coleman, Ph.D.**, is a psychologist in private practice and senior fellow with the Council on Contemporary Families. He is the author of numerous articles, chapters, and books and has been a frequent guest on the Today Show, NPR, BBC, NYU Psychiatry Radio as well as Sesame Street, 20/20, Good Morning America, and PBS. His latest book, *When Parents Hurt: Compassionate Strategies When You and Your Grown Child Don't Get Along*, was written for estranged and alienated parents. His new book, *The Rules of Estrangement*, will be published in 2020.

**David Curl, M.A., Ph.D.**, is a scientist and internationally acclaimed filmmaker whose films have reached over 100 million viewers in 50 countries. As CEO of the non-profit For Kids Sake, he is overseeing a social impact campaign to transform our approach to family separation and producing films and TV ads that highlight and address the risks to children of our current systems.

**Mark Drejza, BSME**, is an engineer in Delaware, has experienced parental alienation in his own family and, fortunately, has been able to resolve it. He is working to create awareness of parental alienation, push toward education and training within the family courts, and find resolution and remedy within the same. Since 2017, he has been raising awareness on parental alienation and PASG with the Delaware Family Law Commission and the Delaware family courts. He is a member of the PASG Committee for Public and Professional Accountability.

**John Dunne, M.D.**, has recently retired from a 42-year child and adolescent psychiatry career. Although he was primarily in private practice, he also did consulting, teaching, and research. He was one of four principal authors of the Parenting Act of 1987 (in the state of Washington), which shifted the disposition of children from property law to social contract law, a critical shift that has been adopted in some form by most states and at least two other countries. In 1994 he and a colleague published the first detailed study of 16 cases of children who had rejected one of their parents.

**Randy Flood, L.L.P.**, has been a practicing psychologist in Michigan since 1992 and is the co-founder of the Men's Resource Center of West Michigan. He provides evaluation, parenting coordination, and parent-child reunification counseling at the Fountain Hill Center in Grand Rapids, where reject and refuse dynamics are present in parent-child contact problems. He has specialized in evaluating parental alienation for over two decades. He is the co-author of two books and a prolific speaker and media consultant in his areas of expertise. Randy offers expert testimony and consultation in family and criminal courts while also offering parenting and divorce coaching throughout the country.

**Ginger Gentile's** third feature documentary, *Erasing Family*, premiering in the fall of 2019, exposes the trauma children suffer when a loving parent is erased from their lives after divorce and is told from the children's point of view. Dedicated to bringing the voice of the child to the forefront and changing the way the media talks about divorce, Ms. Gentile was honored as an Architect of Change by Maria Shriver for her work in reuniting families. Her previous film on this topic, *Erasing Dad*, caused joint custody to be enacted in Argentina. She is the deputy executive director of the National Parents Organization.

**Linda Gottlieb, LMFT, LCSW**, has had 40-plus years education and experience providing clinical treatment services to families of all compositions, orientations, and in all developmental stages. She has treated the wide spectrum of problems, issues, and dysfunctional family interactional patterns that are

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challenging for families. She has expertise in emergency services that included intensive, home-based, crisis-intervention to prevent the psychiatric hospitalization of a child. Since 2003, Linda has focused her clinical practice on families undergoing parental separation/divorce with the goal of facilitating the parents to develop a civil and respectful co-parenting relationship. This focus includes the highly specialized area of diagnosing for and treating parental alienation. She is the author of *The Parental Alienation Syndrome: A Family Therapy and Collaborative Systems Approach to Amelioration*.

**Jorge Guerra González, Ph.D.**, studied law and social-economy. At present he teaches and conducts research at the German Leuphana University. Concerning family law he understands that a multi-disciplinary approach is needed and this it is paramount to understand the reality on conflicting families before publishing or teaching about how to safeguard the children involved. Hence he became a mediator and advocate of the child and the right-of-visit caregiver. From this broad background including theory and practice, he is actively involved in changing the ways and paradigms of parental alienation at an international level.

**Jennifer Harman, Ph.D.**, is an associate professor of psychology, Colorado State University. Dr. Harman earned her doctorate in social psychology from the University of Connecticut in 2005. She also has a master's degree in psychological counseling from Teachers College, Columbia University. Her primary research is in the area of intimate and family relationships, most specifically, on how interpersonal and social factors such as power affect families after separation and divorce. She has published numerous peer-reviewed articles on parental alienating behaviors, with a focus on how it is a form of family violence.

**Brian Hart, MBA, MHC candidate**, is a certified child and family forensics coach and is working toward his master's degree in mental health counseling. He started a parental alienation support group in 2006 which is still holding monthly meetings.

**Lena Hellblom Sjögren, Ph.D.**, completed her doctorate at Stockholm University in 1990. She has since combined being a forensic psychologist and researcher focused on human rights and legal rights of the individual. She first became aware of parental alienation in a combined custody/criminal case. Since then she has worked to bring awareness to the topic of parental alienation.

**Phillip Hendrix** is educated in psychology and business and is certified as a counselor, family mediator, parent educator, forensic specialist, and as a child access provider. He has been appointed by courts as parental responsibilities evaluator, child and family investigator, parenting coordinator, decision maker, arbitrator, parenting time supervisor, and reunification specialist. Extensively trained and experienced in cases involving parental alienation, child abuse, domestic violence, and family relations, he has been vetted as an expert in several dozen cases. He founded and leads the Colorado Parental Alienation Support group, which is a nonprofit providing in-person support, education, awareness, and advocacy for families. He also founded and operated several nonprofit organizations, including the Coalition for Equal Parenting and Colorado Children's Center.

**Cindy Hirsch** has been the CEO of the International Support Network for Alienated Families (ISNAF) since 2012, a nonprofit organization supporting alienated families. She has vast experience in working with alienated parents and is an alienated parent herself undergoing litigation for 14 years. She continues to attempt to reunify with her adult sons. Her work with ISNAF offers support, education, advocacy, and hope for families dealing with parental alienation through monthly support meetings,

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workshops, conferences, symposiums, and a colloquium. ISNAF recently launched a Grief Program designed specifically for alienated parents suffering the loss of access to their children.

**Tom Janssen** is the chairperson of the PASG 2019 Executive Committee. Mr. Janssen, an alienated father in Antwerp, Belgium, is a technologist and the director of JATO, a company helping and coaching alienated parents. After participating in earlier PASG conferences as chairman of the Technology Committee, he accepted the challenge of organizing the Third International Conference of PASG, with the help of colleagues on the Executive, Program, Marketing, Media, and Arrangements Committees. Mr. Janssen thanks all those who made this conference a success, and he sends a big welcome to all of our participants throughout these three days.

**Margaret Jones, Ph.D.**, is a psychotherapist in private practice in the U.S. who treats individuals and families suffering through parental alienation. In addition, she has over 20 years experience conducting research, writing, and adding to parents' and professionals' knowledge about parental alienation and its accompanying family dynamics. Dr. Jones is a longstanding member of PASG and contributes regularly to its newsletter, *Parental Alienation International*. (For confidentiality, she is using an alias for this program announcement.)

**Ashish Joshi, LL.M.**, is the owner and managing partner of his law firm and serves as the lead counsel in high-stakes, complex disputes and litigation matters. Mr. Joshi has counseled and/or represented clients in state and federal courts across the United States and internationally, including in India, United Kingdom, Canada, Luxembourg, Hong Kong, British Virgin Islands, and China. Mr. Joshi has been admitted to the Bar of the Supreme Court of the United States, state bars of New York, Michigan, and the District of Columbia, and the bar of Gujarat, India.

**Su Keenan** is an Emmy-award-winning television journalist who has worked in local and network television, including WNBC and CNN, for more than 25 years. She is currently based in New York and reports for Bloomberg Television, an international network focused on financial and legal issues, which includes high-net-worth divorce. In her personal life, she has been eyewitness to a severe and still-unfolding case of alienation for more than a decade. One of the most extreme alienating events received press attention in a national publication.

**Joan Kloth-Zanard, MFT**, is the founder and board president of PAS Intervention, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with over 45 chapters around the world. She has a master's degree in Marriage and Family, magna cum laude, a B.S. in health and psychology, and degrees in business and exercise science. She has extensive training in parental alienation, reunification, psychological abuse, child psychology, and dysfunctional family processes. She is a vetted expert in parental alienation and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Joani is a trained guardian ad litem, the owner of several online support groups, and the author/co-author of two books. She has created tools and programs to assist in recognizing the parental alienation patterns and dealing with them in court.

**Cara E. Koch, D.Min.**—after 43 years as an alienated parent with a professional background in child development and family relationships, plus a doctorate in children's (innate) spirituality—finds answers to her questions: Why me? How did this happen? and What is the purpose? Through a process of deep introspection, she overcame depression, despite remaining unreconciled with her son. With newly discovered resources that could have led to a different outcome if they were available, Cara has found a

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renewed sense of purpose in promoting awareness of parental alienation through her book *From Heartbreak to Healing: Resolving Parental Alienation*.

**Heleen Koppejan, M.Sc.**, is a self-employed life course psychologist in the Netherlands who graduated cum laude on parental alienation or parent detachment. In her psychology practice she supports parents, families, and their (legal and social) counselors in the issue of parent detachment. She also provides training to interdisciplinary colleagues who are confronted with parent detachment and is a Ph.D. candidate. She has been selected by the Dutch government to help find both legal and social solutions for parental alienation as member of the team *Scheiden zonder Schade*, which means divorce without damage.

**Demosthenes Lorandos, Ph.D., J.D.**, has been a clinical and forensic psychologist for the past four decades. He is also a litigator and is admitted to the Bar in New York, California, Michigan, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C. He has been admitted to practice in many federal district courts as well the Second and Eleventh Federal Courts of Appeals. He is a member of the Bar of the United States Supreme Court and is a Thomson-Reuters “Key author” and is a peer reviewer for numerous journals.

**Robert Lowden** is a graduate of Indiana University with B.S. degree in Business Management. His career has included recreation, construction, and security technology industries. He is the father of three daughters, five granddaughters, and one grandson. For the last five years Robert has been focused on attempting to restore contact and reunify two granddaughters with their mother, his daughter. This focus required attaining a fundamental understanding of parental alienation. It has also led to an ongoing effort to educate the Indiana Department of Child Services, state legislators, and related agencies on the counterintuitive nature of parental alienation and the signs that can be manifested in parental conflicts.

**Brian Ludmer, BComm, LLB**, is an attorney in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He conducts a family law practice focused on situations involving custody disputes, child estrangement, and parental alienation as well as high-net-worth divorce litigation and business valuation. Mr. Ludmer is a co-author of *The High-Conflict Custody Battle*.

**Loretta Maase, LPC**, has a broad range of experience in the counseling field, including working with individuals seeking to rebuild their lives after trauma, divorce, and loss. She is trained in a variety of therapeutic models including Structural Family Therapy, Dialectic Behavior Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and trauma-informed therapy. Loretta has worked with high conflict families since the mid 1990’s and currently specializes in conducting parental alienation assessments, treatment, and reunification.

**Mandy Matthewson, Ph.D.**, is a senior lecturer in psychology at the University of Tasmania (UTAS). Dr Matthewson is the lead researcher in the Family and Interpersonal Relationships Research Lab at UTAS and Chair of the Parental Alienation Study Group’s Research Committee. Her research interests include exploring family relationships, family violence and parental alienation. Dr Matthewson is also a clinical psychologist in private practice where she has developed expertise in working with families and individuals who have been affected by parental alienation.

**Maureen MacNeill** is a Canadian journalist /editor/speechwriter working at an international organization in Vienna, Austria. After years of court battles initiated by the father of her children,

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throughout which she managed to maintain both custody and healthy children, the father managed in 2016 to completely alienate the younger daughter (now 16). The older daughter (now 18) is also alienated, but maintains contact. Despite both girls failing out of school, becoming psychologically ill (the younger one severely suicidal and requiring 9 months of hospitalization), neither the hospital nor the social services intervened to remove her from the father, and the court granted him full custody.

**Catherine MacWillie** has 36 years experience dealing with family law, including 24 years as a law enforcement officer with the Los Angeles Police Department responding to radio calls dealing with divorce and custody. She was a first responder to child abuse investigations as well as other specialized assignments also impacted by family law. Catherine frequently speaks on issues such as “Crime, Court and PA,” “Law Enforcement and PA,” and “Parallel Parenting, An Alternative to Co-Parenting.” Catherine spent ten years researching the cause and effect of family law. She spent the past 12 years as a child custody and divorce coach with clients domestically and abroad.

**Philip Marcus** was born and educated in England. He moved to Jerusalem in 1978. He served as a Judge of the Jerusalem Family Court from its opening in 1997 until his retirement in 2012. Since retiring he has written and published numerous articles, for example, on Parental Responsibilities, on Prevention of Parental Alienation and Contact Failure, on Therapeutic Jurisprudence in the Israeli Family Court, and on Testamentary Capacity and on Guardianship relating to persons with disabilities. He has spoken and presented workshops on Family Law, including Child Law and on Family Courts, on five continents.

**William J. McGee** is a novelist, author, and investigative journalist. His novel *Half the Child* chronicles a custody and abduction drama from the perspective of a devoted and loving father; it was a semifinalist in both the James Jones First Novel Competition and the William Faulkner Creative Writing Competition. Mr. McGee received an MFA in Fiction from Columbia University and has taught undergraduate and graduate Creative Writing. He also is a consumer advocate for airline passengers, the former Editor of Consumer Reports Travel Letter, and the author of *Attention All Passengers*, a nonfiction exposé of the airline industry. Mr. McGee lives in Connecticut and has one son.

**Amittai Megged, MFT**, is the head of the training program for family and couples therapy at the Tel Hai academic college. He is the founder and director of the Megged School for Differentiation and Worthiness based Psychotherapy. He is a social worker by training and a certified family therapist and instructor. Mr. Megged is appointed by Israeli courts as an expert in parental alienation. Mr. Megged studied family therapy with Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, Harry Aponte, Dr. Susanna Bullrich, Dr. Daniel Gottlieb, Judith Grinbaum, and Dr. David Schnarch. He is author of five books; the last two are *Differentiation Based Couple Therapy* and *Being Worthy*.

**Shuly Megged, MSW**, is a social worker and family counselor and the head of the Contact Center in Nahariya, Israel. Shuly treats families in extreme neglect, at their homes, and in projects in northern Israel. She is court appointed as an expert in parental alienation and works in co-therapy with parental alienation with Amittai Megged. She is a certified parent coordinator. She is a student of David Schnarch.

**Steven G. Miller, M.D.**, has degrees in psychology and medicine from Brown University and completed his residency training at Brown and Harvard. He was on the staff at Harvard Medical School and is board certified in internal medicine. He has special interest in the medicine–psychiatry interface. He is the author of the chapter, “Clinical Reasoning and Clinical Decision Making in Cases of Child Alignment:

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Diagnostic and Therapeutic Issues.” He consults and provides expert testimony in parental alienation cases around the country.

**Sandra Moon Dancer B.Sc., M.H.Sc.**, is an internationally acclaimed shamanic energy medicine teacher, business and life coach, inspirational speaker, workshop leader, and sacred site travel leader. She is the executive director of the Centre of Circle Wisdom, an energy medicine centre she founded in 2003 in Toronto, Canada. With over thirty years experience in healing and health care communities and a range of clinical, research, and academic work, Sandra is a bridge for people and communities between health systems and indigenous healing. She also works with families and children in domestic violence. Since 2010, she has been a key speaker at Canada’s largest alternative wellness convention, Whole Life Expo.

**Stephen Morrison, Ph.D.**, received a doctorate in the Administration of Justice in 2006 from the University of Southern Mississippi. His dissertation is titled, “Parental Alienation Syndrome: An Inter-Rater Reliability Study, Alienating Behaviors, Related Justice System Issues.” He contributed to *Parental Alienation, DSM-5, and ICD-11*. He worked as a police officer for the Houston Police Department for 41 years retiring in 2017. He presently serves as a reserve deputy. He has taught as an adjunct since 2001, and presently adjunct for the University of Houston Downtown and Sam Houston State University.

**Colleen M. Murray, Ph.D.**, is a licensed practicing counselor and professor at Drury University. Dr. Murray has an interest in better defining intimate partner violence to include parental alienation. She has spent many years working in the area of intimate partner violence and studying the effects and interventions for children subjected to intimate partner violence. Dr. Murray is in private practice assisting families with co-parenting, reunification of alienated parent, and parent management techniques. Dr. Murray regularly testifies as an expert witness in high conflict divorce case and speaks at continuing education conferences for family law attorneys and judges.

**Olga Odinetz, Ph.D.**, completed her university studies in ecology and marine biology with a doctoral dissertation in Guam and French Polynesia, then worked for 20 years in Africa and Brazil in the environment and development field. Her three children were alienated by their father when she divorced in 2000. She founded the self-help NGO ACALPA (Association against Parental Alienation) and then wrote the book, *Conflict Separations and Parental Alienation*, with the psychiatrist Roland Broca. Fully involved in ACALPA, she has been working as a court interpreter for 8 years. She still has no news of her children.

**Louis Pilla, M.S.Ed.**, is a seasoned publishing expert with over 20 years of experience in providing content and digital products to healthcare audiences. He is a writer and editor with proven ability to deliver compelling work that provides context, meaning, and insight based on deep understanding of healthcare trends and dynamics. He has also served a director of product strategy at a major scientific and healthcare publishing company. He is editor-in-chief of *Parental Alienation International*, the bimonthly publication for PASG members.

**Joe Rabiega, L.P.C.**, is a licensed professional counselor supervisor in North Carolina. He holds both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in psychology, and has also completed additional psychology education/training in a post-master’s program. He has diverse experience that includes working with depression, anxiety, trauma, parental alienation, bipolar disorder, behavior management issues, family discord, and psychosis. Mr. Rabiega works with children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families. He

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has had the pleasure of providing therapy in a variety of settings including: office-based, home-based, community, and hospitals.

**Mark Roseman, Ph.D.**, is founder and CEO of the Toby Center for Family Transitions providing reunification services throughout much of Florida. He has worked in the co-parenting field since 1999 when serving as assistant director for Child Access Services with David L. Levy, joint custody pioneer and CEO of the Children's Rights Council in Washington, D.C. He is the author of *Preserving Family Ties: An Authoritative Guide to Understanding Divorce* and *Child Custody for Parents and Family Professionals*. A graduate of the Union Institute & University, Roseman is an international speaker on high conflict divorce, and was a contributing columnist for Knight Ridder Tribune Syndicate and the Huffington Post.

**Eric Rothfus, B.S.**, has 25 years of start-up experience as a serial entrepreneur with extensive engineering and operational experience. He has founded four successful ventures and participated in three others. Currently Eric is a managing director of the Guggenheim Technology Ventures I venture capital fund. In 2000, Eric received the Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year award. He holds a B.S. in Computer Science and Electrical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His graduate study includes wide-area networking at Cornell University in high-energy physics and distributed processing systems at the University of Texas at Austin.

**Lisa Rothfus, LCSW**, is an experienced therapist who has worked with individuals, couples, and families for the last 25 years in the Austin area. She is dedicated to helping her clients through major life transitions like a marriage crisis, mid-life changes, separation, divorce, career changes, parenting issues, and accomplishing new personal goals. She also offers couples counseling, co-parent counseling, and divorce counseling. She has interned at two Harvard teaching hospitals and is the founder of Family Clarity in Austin which involves the assessment and treatment of parental alienation.

**Shazia Nagamia Sparkman, J.D.**, is a family law attorney practicing in the Tampa, Florida, area. She received her law degree from University of Buffalo where she served on the law review. She is admitted to the bar in Florida and New York. She specializes in divorce, custody, and time-sharing cases.

**Cory Sprunger, J.D.**, is an Indiana attorney and owner of Sprunger & Sprunger, a network of law firms in northeast Indiana, along with his wife and attorney, Allison Sprunger. Before practicing law and while in school, Cory worked at the White House under President George W. Bush, at the Republican National Committee, and in the United State Senate for Senator Richard Lugar. He graduated from the John Wesley Honors College at Indiana Wesleyan University and from Pepperdine University School of Law in Malibu, California. Cory and his wife have two children – Jack (9 months) and Zoey (3 years).

**Anna Tivade, LSW**, is a licensed social worker in Northern New Jersey. She is the founder of Parental Alienation Support & Awareness-NJ (PASA-NJ) and facilitates monthly mutual support groups for alienated parents; runs educational programs on high-conflict relationships and parental alienation; and provides parental alienation consultation and parent coaching. Anna is called to her profession from her experience as adult child of parental alienation and an ACOA; a wife; and a mom and step-mom of six children. Anna volunteers with organizations that support causes relating to women, children and healthy functioning families, diversity and culture, and substance abuse prevention.

**Christine Turner, MSW, J.D.**, blends her educational training in social work and the law to meet the needs of clients as a TMCA Distinguished Mediator. In collaboration with Dr. Mary Alvarez she is the co-

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developer of *Resetting the Family*, a educational program for families in high conflict. Through ongoing research and child centric parent education, Chris works to alleviate the long term impact of high conflict on children.

**Amy Van Gunst, M.A., M.Div., LPC**, provides individual, group, and marital therapy with the Fountain Hill Center for Counseling and Consultation, where she has served as executive coordinator since 1994. Her practice includes many court-related counseling services, including parent–child reunification, parent coordination, and therapeutic supervised parenting. Over many years assisting clients involved in the family court system, she has developed deep expertise in identifying needs, creating pathways for effective communication, and developing healthy solutions that serve children’s and families’ long-term best interests.

**Karen Woodall** is a highly experienced psychotherapist who has worked with separated families since 1991. She is currently studying for a Ph.D. Using internationally accepted standards and protocols, Karen has developed new ways of working with alienated children and is now widely regarded as one of the foremost experts in the field. Her influential blog has a worldwide readership. She is the co-author of *Understanding Parental Alienation: Learning to Cope, Helping to Heal*.

**Nick Woodall, M.S.**, holds a master’s degree in psychodynamic psychotherapy and has worked with separated families since 1999. In addition to his therapeutic work with alienated families, Nick is an expert witness in the U.K. family courts. He has worked extensively on family policy, developing new services for the U.K. government. A former BBC Online parenting expert and writer, he is the co-author of *Understanding Parental Alienation: Learning to Cope, Helping to Heal*.

**Shawn Wygant, M.A., TLLP**, is a highly skilled and dedicated forensic psychology associate and expert witness. He specializes in the diagnosis, assessment, and treatment of parental alienation as well as other complex forms of child psychological maltreatment. For the past 6 years, he has worked with Demosthenes Lorandos, Ph.D., J.D., on parental alienation cases throughout the United States as a forensic psychology associate and expert witness helping courts make the best possible decisions concerning the best interest of the child. Their forensic psychology consulting firm, PsychLaw, provides target parents with expert analysis and testimony concerning parental alienation.

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**Parental Alienation Study Group**  
[www.pasg.info](http://www.pasg.info)

**Parental Alienation Database**  
<http://mc.vanderbilt.edu/pasg>

**Online Parental Alienation Education**  
<http://ncapa.thinkific.com>