

# An Attachment-Based Model of Parental Alienation: Professional Consultation

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# Introduction

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This booklet is intended as a structured consultation for mental health professionals in support of parents who believe that their family is evidencing a specific form of pathology that represents a “special population” of children and families who require specialized professional knowledge and expertise to appropriately assess, diagnose, and treat. The specific features of this pathology involve the trans-generational transmission of attachment trauma of one parent to the child, mediated by the narcissistic and/or borderline personality processes of this parent that are significantly distorting family relationships following a divorce.

This booklet is being provided to these parents within the framework of Standard 3.09 of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct of the American Psychological Association (2002) regarding Cooperation with Other Professionals, which states,

When indicated and professionally appropriate, psychologists cooperate with other professionals in order to serve their clients/patients effectively and appropriately. (p. 6)

In this booklet, I am essentially acting as a psychologist consultant to these parents and families regarding their concerns, and this booklet represents my outreach to you as a diagnosing and treating mental health professional to explain the concerns of these parents and ask for your cooperation in assessing the domains of pathology that are of concern.

The special features of the pathology about which this parent is concerned would define this particular client and client family as a “special population” requiring specialized professional knowledge and expertise to appropriately assess, diagnose, and treat, and would activate Standard 2.01a of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct of the American Psychological Association (2002) regarding Boundaries of Competence, which states,

Psychologists provide services, teach and conduct research with populations and in areas only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, consultation, study or professional experience. (p. 4)

This booklet is being provided as a structured consultation to alert other mental health professionals to the potentially special features involved with this particular client and client family that may warrant specialized assessment for specific diagnostic features, and specialized expertise in treatment. This structured consultation is being offered in the spirit of Standard 3.09 encouraging inter-professional consultation and Standard 2.03 regarding Maintaining Competence which states, “Psychologists undertake ongoing efforts to develop and maintain their competence.” (p. 5)