

Working With Domestic Violence Survivors Who Have Been Accused of Parental Alienation

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Rights of Women

- Founded in 1975, our mission to achieve equality, justice and safety in the law for all women
- Provide free legal advice to women on family law, criminal law, immigration and asylum law and sexual harassment at work
- Publish free legal guides and information on women's rights
- Campaign to improve law and policy for women
- Train professionals to improve understanding of the law and its impact on women's rights



Líf án ofbeldis (life without violence)

- Icelandic activist group formed in 2019
- Women and adult children that have been subject to domestic and systemic abuse
- Petitions
- Revealing court documents
- Online community and platform
- Activism in various forms
- Instrumental aid for women with ongoing custody cases



Impact on survivors facing allegations of PA

- Significant trauma caused by the processes and professional responses to allegations of PA
- No resources left:
 - physical, mental, emotional
 - financial
- Children are forcefully removed from safe care of mother
- Children and women are discouraged from disclosing abuse
- Children and women are gaslit into thinking the abuse is not happening
- Survivors responses vary

Systemic barriers

- Lack of knowledge about domestic and sexual abuse and parental alienation origins and basis
- Lack of transparency
- Lack of accountability
- Lack of resources
- Influence of societal stereotypes and language around domestic violence and differences in parenting roles / expectations between mothers and fathers
- Subjectivity, biased, select professionals (judges and psychologists)

Working with survivors facing these barriers

- acknowledge experiences of abuse and problems with the system
- understand the issues - training!
- challenge victim-blaming and poor decision making
- promote the voice of the child
- be alert to the indicators of PA pseudo-science
- build a case strategy with the survivor that challenges the PA narrative

UK	Iceland
Alienating behaviours / alienation obstructive / obstructing contact high conflict cognitive dissonance / psychological splitting allegations of fabricated induced illness	Mother who withholds contact (<i>i. tálmunarmóðir</i>) Causing a detachment (<i>i. völdun tengslarofs</i>) Disobedient conduct of the mother (<i>i. vanvirðandi háttsemi móður</i>) Health dilemma (<i>i. hollustuklemma</i>)

The good that has come from the work that has been done

Women and children's lives are saved

Acknowledgment of the abuse - domestic and systemic

Empowerment of women in their maternal instinct, as well as legal obligations, to protect their children

Creating communities - an important part of the trauma healing process

Awareness and a shift in the discourse

"I had to trust myself and trust that I - as a protective mother - am above the system"