



**RESEARCH AND RESOURCES**  
**FOR LEGAL AND MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS**

**Parent-Child Trauma Coerced Attachment and Alienation**

“Let’s hope this is the beginning of it... this is the beginning of us,  
as a society starting to realise... that no matter what happens  
between parents, that children are not weapons that can be used  
against the other.”

(Adult alienated in childhood - Verhaar et al., 2022).

To learn more,  
visit the **Eeny Meeny Miney Mo Foundation**  
[www.emmm.org.au](http://www.emmm.org.au)

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Founder of Eeny Meeny Miney Mo Foundation

## **RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

### **Understanding and Managing Parental Alienation. A Guide to Assessment and Intervention.** J. Haines, M. Matthewson & Judge Marcus Turnbull (2020) **Australia**

In *Understanding and Managing Parental Alienation: A Guide to Assessment and Intervention*, Janet Haines, Mandy Matthewson and Marcus Turnbull offer a comprehensive analysis of contemporary understanding of parental alienation. Grounded in recent scientific advances, this is the first book of its kind providing resources on how to identify parental alienation and a guide to evidence-based intervention.

Parental alienation is a process in which one parent manipulates their child to negatively perceive and reject the other parent. Recognising this phenomenon and knowing when to intervene is often the biggest challenge faced by practitioners and this book provides a guide to this process. Divided into six parts, it examines what parental alienation is and how it is caused, how it affects each family member as a mental health concern and form of violence, and how to assess, identify and intervene successfully from a legal and therapy standpoint. Taking on a gender-neutral approach, the book is filled with contemporary case examples from male and female perspectives, cutting-edge research, practitioner-client dialogues, and practitioners' reflections to show the difficult realities of parental alienation.

Practical and accessible, this is an essential resource for mental health professionals working with families experiencing parental alienation, as well as postgraduate students of clinical psychology, counselling, family therapy, social work, and child and family psychology. This book will also be of immense interest to family lawyers and mediators due to its multidisciplinary approach.

### **Litigating Parental Alienation: Evaluating & Presenting an Effective Case in Court.** A. Joshi (2021)

There is no doubt that parental alienation exists and that U.S. courts have acknowledged the concept, although the theory can sometimes be misused. This practitioner's manual provides an overview of the concept of parental alienation and explains how to correctly handle it in court. "Hands-on" practice pointers and sample materials on litigating parental alienation make this an essential resource for the family lawyer.

### **Parental Alienation - Science and Law.** D. Lorandos & W. Bernet (2020)

Parental Alienation – Science and Law explains the research that creates the foundation for the assessment, identification, and intervention in cases of parental alienation (PA). For attorneys, judges, and family law professionals, this book explains in detail the scientific basis for testimony and legal decisions that relate to PA. There are two complementary features for most of the chapters. First, the chapter authors address how evidence regarding PA meets the criteria of the Frye, Daubert, and Mohan cases as well as the Federal Rules of Evidence for testimony by experts. The second feature is to refute common misinformation. There is debate and disagreement about some aspects of PA theory. The editors of this book are concerned that some of the discourse regarding PA has spun out of control, into pervasive misinformation. This book provides plenty of evidence for overcoming that hurdle. The editors of this book and the chapter authors have extensive experience with both clinical and legal aspects of divorce, child custody, parenting time evaluations, PA, and related topics. The editors and chapter authors include six psychologists, three physicians, two social workers, four attorneys, and one judge. Collectively, these mental health professionals have testified as expert witnesses hundreds of times regarding family law topics. As an additional feature, the book contains four appendices and three indexes. Appendix A defines the concepts used in this book, so that the chapter authors and readers will use terminology in a consistent manner. Appendix B lists more than one thousand trial and appellate cases in the U.S. involving PA, organized by state. Appendix C presents twenty rather dramatic vignettes involving PA. Finally, Appendix D, "Sample Motion and Brief for Extended Voir Dire," provides a motion and supporting brief asking the court to allow extended time to examine the competency of a proposed expert.

## **Parental Alienation: An Evidence-Based Approach.** D. McCartan (2022).

This book provides a comprehensive overview of established evidence-based interventions for the problems inherent in parental alienation. The book focuses on helping families and ensuring the needs of the child are met. Increasing attention has been given to the subject of parental alienation in recent years, as divorce rates have increased and more children are being brought up in the context of ongoing parental conflict, risking significant emotional harm. Chapters point to the application of numerous evidence-based interventions that are already available and detail how to identify, assess and intervene effectively with families where parental alienation has been identified. This text will be of interest to those working in the family courts, particularly expert witnesses, clinical psychologists, therapists, social workers, guardians and other legal professionals, in addition to researchers with an interest in parental alienation.

## **The Litigator's Handbook of Forensic Medicine, Psychiatry and Psychology.**

Demosthenes Lorandos. (2023) **43 contributors from five countries.** Forensic medicine, psychiatry and psychology.

The Litigator's Handbook of Forensic Medicine, Psychiatry, and Psychology is a comprehensive resource tailored for litigators and experts who handle expert evidence in forensic medicine, psychiatry and psychology.

## **Post Graduate Certificates in Parental Alienation Studies**

- <https://parentalalienation.eu/post-graduate-award-in-parental-alienation-studies/>
- <https://ift-malta.com/courses/>

## **Spectrum: Specialising in Personality Disorder and Complex Trauma**

Website: <https://www.spectrumbpd.com.au/>

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Education and Training: <https://www.spectrumbpd.com.au/events>

Carers (Family and Friends): <https://www.spectrumbpd.com.au/information-resources/information-for-families-friends-carers>

Eventbrite (to Follow) <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/o/spectrum-personality-disorder-and-complex-trauma-12815647934>

## **Australian BPD Foundation**

<https://bpdfoundation.org.au/resources.php>

**Nearly 40% of the Parental Alienation literature has been published since 2016.**

**Parental Alienation research has moved beyond an early stage of scientific development and has produced a scientifically trustworthy knowledge base.**

The current state of Parental Alienation scholarship meets three criteria of a maturing field of scientific inquiry: an expanding literature, a shift toward quantitative studies, and a growing body of research that tests theory-generated hypotheses ([Harman et al., 2022](#)).

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### **Articles by Dr Mandy Matthewson and Amanda Sillars**

- Exposing Woozles: The Detractors & Deniers of Parental Alienation. Do Not Fall for The Straw Man Fallacy <https://emmm.org.au/emmm-newsletter/f/exposing-woozles-the-detractors-deniers-of-parental-alienation>
- Through the eyes of Alienated Children <https://emmm.org.au/emmm-newsletter/f/through-the-eyes-of-alienated-children>



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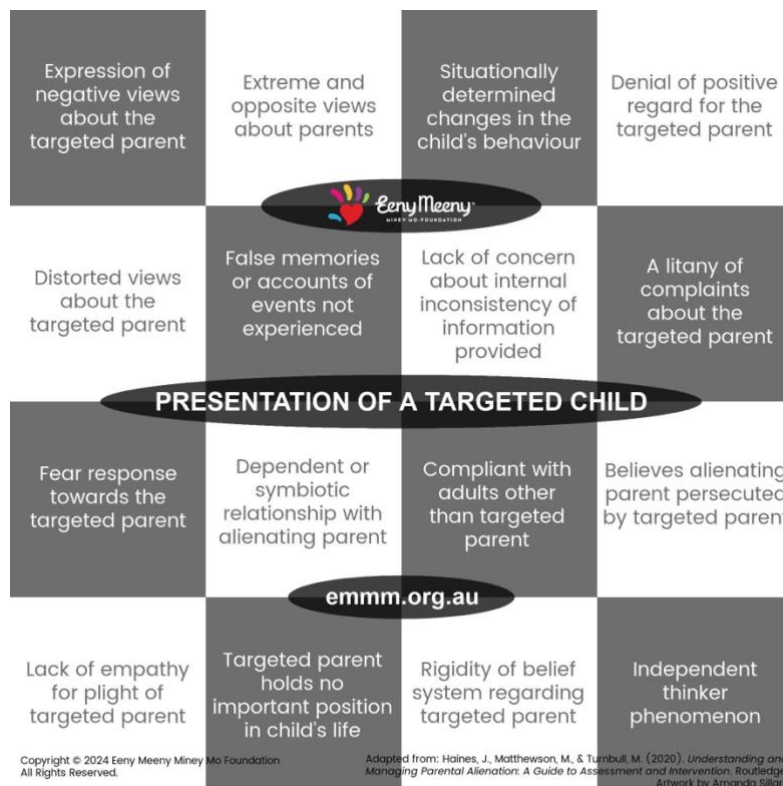
## Children Affected by Parent-Child Trauma Coerced Attachment and Alienation

Expression of negative views about the targeted parent	Situationally determined changes in the child's behaviour	Distorted views about the targeted parent	A litany of complaints about the targeted parent	Compliant with adults other than targeted parent	Lack of empathy for plight of targeted parent
Independent thinker phenomenon	Children Affected by Parent-Child Trauma Coerced Attachment and Alienation		Lack of concern about internal inconsistency of information provided	Dependent or symbiotic relationship with alienating parent	Targeted parent holds no important position in child's life
Extreme and opposite views about parents			Denial of positive regard for the targeted parent	False memories or accounts of events not experienced	Fear response towards the targeted parent
disrupted social-emotional development	maladaptive coping	self-harm	depression	suicide ideation and suicide	
attachment disorders	obsessive-compulsive tendencies	resentment	anxiety	family violence and abuse (children can go on to be in abusive relationships meaning their partners are abusive)	
interpersonal problems	loneliness and isolation	shame and guilt	somatic symptoms	trauma related disorders (eg. complex PTSD)	
paranoid thinking	low self-esteem	anger	substance related problems	persistent complex bereavement (ongoing grief and losses)	
confusion & cognitive distortions	eating disorders	emotional dysregulation	depression	intergenerational transmission of parental alienation	
		abandonment and trust issues	helplessness		

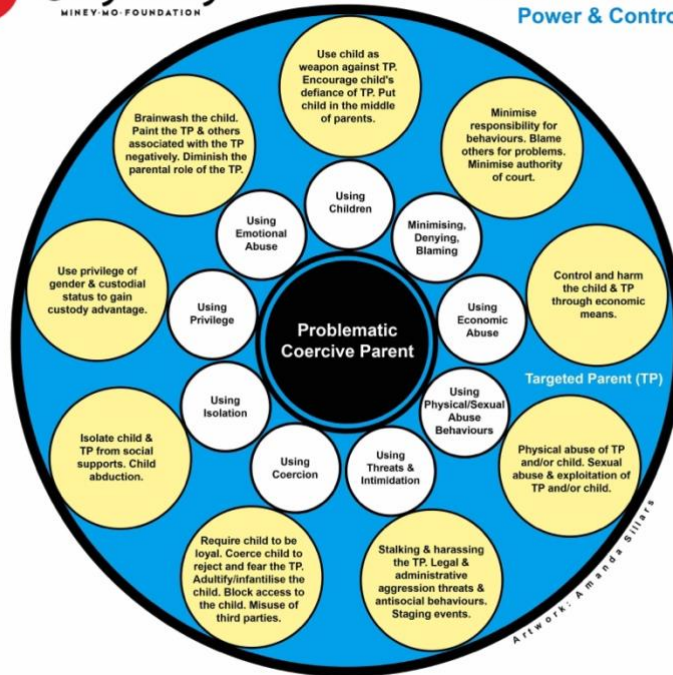
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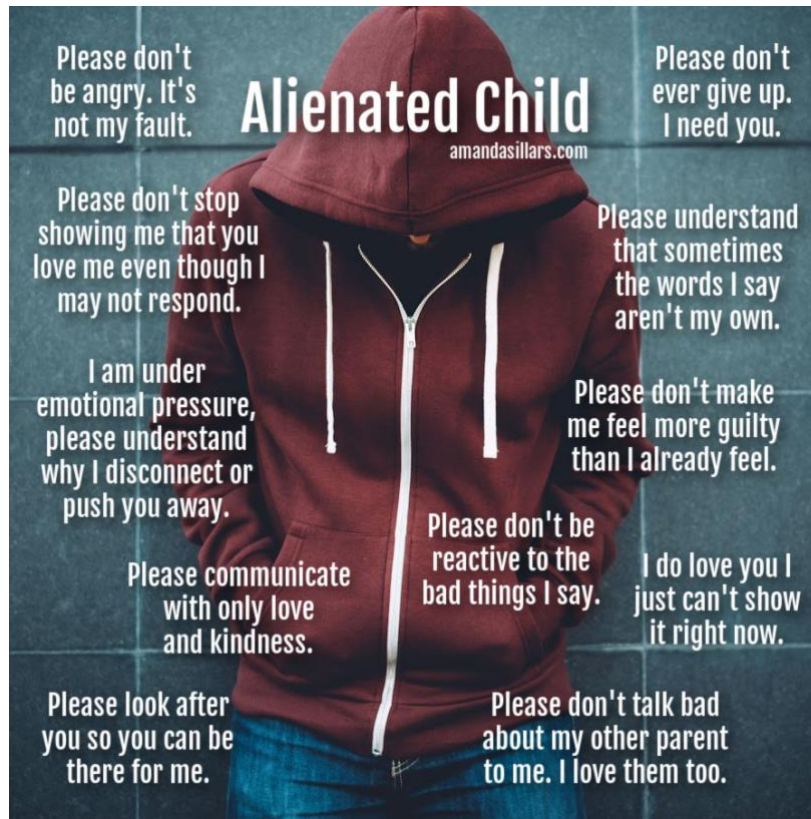




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### Losses Experienced by Children Alienated from a Parent





## EMMM for Young People



**Comparative Analysis: Attachment Bonds, Trauma Bonds, Protective Parents and Alienating Parents**

Criteria	Attachment Bond	Trauma Bond	Protective Parent	Alienating Parent
<b>Emotional Connection</b>	Strong, Secure Fosters Trust and Comfort	Mixed, Conflicted Emotions Due to Abusive Distressing Experiences	Supportive of Healthy Emotional Bonds	Undermines Emotional Bonds and Causes Confusion
<b>Child's Well-being</b>	Promotes the Child's Well-being and Security.	May Compromise the Child's Well-being and Stability	Prioritises the Child's Safety and Emotional Stability	Disregards the Child's Well-being, Prioritises Own Agenda and Themselves Over Child's Needs
<b>Relationship Dynamics</b>	Nurturing and Supportive	Abusive and Manipulative	Fosters Healthy Relationships between Child and Both Parents (+ extended family)	Undermines the Relationship with Other Parent (+/- extended family)
<b>Behaviour Towards Child</b>	Encourages Healthy Interaction and Attachment	Conflicted Responses and Potential Dependency	Supports the Child's Relationships with Both Parents	Undermines the Child's Relationship with Other Parent
<b>Impact on Child</b>	Positive Impact, Encourages Growth and Development	Confusing, May Lead to Emotional Dependency	Positive Impact, Encourages Healthy Family Dynamics	Negative Impact, Hinders Emotional Growth and Stability
<b>Impact on Development</b>	Encourages Independence and Healthy Attachment	Mixed Emotions, Potential for Attachment Issues	Encourages Bonding with Both Parents	Hinders Healthy Bonding and Emotional Stability

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