

# **Key Questions for Identifying Alienation Dynamics: A Resource for Parents, Counsellors, Psychologists, and Lawyers**

Disclaimer: This resource is intended for informational purposes only and should not be considered legal or psychological advice.

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# **Key Questions for Identifying Alienation Dynamics:**

## **A Resource for Parents, Counsellors, Psychologists, and Lawyers**

This resource is designed to help you navigate the complexities of family relationships, particularly when there are concerns about a parent's influence on their child.

### **Why is this important?**

When a child's relationship with one parent is negatively impacted, it can significantly affect their emotional well-being and overall development. This resource offers a framework for understanding these situations and identifying potential warning signs.

### **Questions to guide your understanding:**

The questions in this guide encourage open and honest communication, helping you gain valuable insights into the family dynamics. By exploring these areas, we can identify potential concerns and promote a child-centred approach.

### **Understanding Complex Behaviours**

Some parents may exhibit patterns of behaviour that can contribute to a strained relationship with their child. These patterns can stem from a range of factors, including:

#### **Personality Traits**

- Narcissistic tendencies
- Borderline personality traits
- Paranoid personality traits
- Histrionic personality traits

#### **Cognitive Distortions**

- A tendency to distort reality and perceive events in a biased or exaggerated manner.

#### **Emotional Management Challenges**

- Difficulty regulating emotions and expressing them constructively.
- A tendency to externalise blame and responsibility onto others.

#### **Relationship Patterns**

- Difficulty accepting responsibility for their own actions.
- A history of unhealthy or dysfunctional relationships.
- A strong desire for control and dominance.
- A tendency towards vengeful or retaliatory behaviour.

### **Seeking Professional Support**

If you suspect that a child's relationship with a parent is being negatively influenced, it is crucial to seek professional guidance from a qualified mental health professional. They can provide you with support, resources, and a personalised assessment of the situation.

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## Exploring Control and Manipulation Dynamics

### Encouragement & Discipline

- Can you describe in detail what you have done to encourage your child to visit the other parent?
- How do you encourage your child to attend school or complete their homework?
- How do you handle it when your child resists doing things like brushing their teeth or going to bed?
- Why do you approach the child's refusal to visit their other parent differently than refusals to complete other tasks?

### Influence & Authority

- Do you believe you have influence over your child's decisions in daily routines? Why do you think this influence doesn't apply when encouraging visits with the other parent?
- If your child resists seeing their other parent, what steps do you believe are appropriate, and have you taken them?

### Inconsistencies

- When your child refuses to do homework, do you accept their decision or take steps to guide them otherwise? How does this compare to their decision about visiting the other parent?
- Have you ever made comments like, 'You don't have to go if you don't want to'? How do you think this might affect the child?
- Does your child ever express strong opinions or beliefs that seem very different from what you believe? If so, how do you handle those differences in opinion? Do you encourage them to explore different perspectives or try to convince them to agree with you?

### Emotional Influence

- Have you ever expressed feelings like sadness or frustration when the child visits the other parent? How do you think this might influence their willingness?
- Have you ever said, 'It's okay if you don't want to see them, I understand why you might not want to go,' or something similar? If so, how do you think this might have impacted your child's feelings about visiting the other parent?"

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## **Addressing the Child's Behaviour Towards the Targeted Parent**

### **Respect & Communication**

- How do you respond when the child speaks disrespectfully or rudely about their other parent?
- Can you provide examples of when you have corrected your child for speaking negatively about their other parent?
- Do you encourage your child to speak directly to their other parent if they have concerns?

### **Entitled or Dismissive Behaviour**

- How do you address it when your child says that their other parent is not important to them?
- What actions have you taken when your child refuses to follow rules set by their other parent?

### **Half-Truths & Misinformation**

- When your child shares negative stories about the other parent, how do you verify their accuracy?
- Have you encouraged your child to consider the other parent's side of the story?
- Do you ever find yourself questioning the other parent's motives or actions, even when you don't have all the information? If so, how do you work to manage those feelings and ensure they don't influence your interactions with your child?

### **Alienating Behaviours**

- Do you believe that your child's negative attitudes towards their other parent are entirely their own, or do you think your feelings might have influenced their perceptions?
- Do you believe that both parents have a significant role to play in your child's life, even if their relationship with one parent is challenging? If so, how do you communicate this to your child?
- Have you ever made statements like, 'I understand why you wouldn't want to visit,' or similar comments?
- Has your child ever expressed a preference for spending more time with you than with the other parent? If so, how have you responded to their preference?
- How do you ensure that your child is not hearing only one perspective about their other parent?

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