Boundaries of Professional Competence Attachment-Based Model of “Parental Alienation” 4 of 18 The construct traditionally referred to as “parental alienation” represents: A. An induced distortion to the normal-range functioning of the child’s attachment System; B. The distortion to the child’s attachment system is created and mediated by narcissistic and borderline personality disorder processes of the pathogenic parent; C. The narcissistic and borderline personality traits of the pathogenic parent are creating/inducing a shared delusional belief system with the child regarding the supposedly “abusive” parenting of the other parent (the targeted-rejected parent) as a component of a trauma reenactment narrative emerging from the “internal working models” (i.e., the core relationship schemas) of the narcissistic/borderline parent’s attachment system. D. The induced distortion to the normal-range functioning of the child’s attachment system is the product of a cross-generational coalition of the child with a narcissistic/borderline parent against the other parent in which the addition of parental personality pathology (particularly the splitting dynamic) transforms the cross-generational coalition into a particularly malignant and virulent form that seeks to entirely terminate the other parent’s relationship with the child. A full description of the psychopathology of attachment-based “parental alienation” is contained in An Attachment-Based Model of Parental Alienation: Foundations, by C.A. Childress, Psy.D. Attachment-Based Model of “Parental Alienation” 5 of 18 As a result of the complex and interwoven pathology of attachment-based “parental alienation,” the professional assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of the pathology associated with an attachment-based model of “parental alienation” requires specialized professional knowledge, training, and expertise in the following domains of professional practice: ● Attachment Theory : Since the fundamental pathology involves a distortion to the child’s attachment bond.

“Emotional stuck-together fusion and emotional cutoff are interrelated expressions of undifferentiation… The greater the degree of stuck-together fusion in a family, the greater the degree of cutoff that will follow. This interlocking process continues to the multigenerational history of the family.” (Titelman, 2003, p. 21)

Mother is asking the judge to consider all facts relevant to child custody, based on fact and not assumption, presumption, or recommendation made without viewing all findings of facts. Mother does not agree with the mediator’s recommendation as this will only hinder the relationship between mother and children.

Fact-finding refers to a process by which the facts relevant to a dispute are determined. It is a process whereby a neutral third party investigates a matter to determine the disputed fact. This process is usually used in Alternate Dispute Resolution procedures involving technical issues or cases in which significant factual issues are part of a larger dispute. With regard to the binding effect of fact-finding results, the parties can negotiate on making the fact-finding results binding or nonbinding.

Furthermore, to conduct child custody evaluations that have zero inter-rater reliability denies “equal quality in the processes, procedures, and services being conducted by psychologists” in violation of Principle D of the APA ethics code.

All psychologists, including those in the APA, are required by Standards 1.04 and 1.05 of the APA ethics codes to do something when they become aware of ethical code violations by other psychologists. For the APA NOT to act in response to known ethical violations within forensic psychology is to cause harm to parents and children, in violation of Standard 3.04 of the APA ethics code, to “take reasonable steps to avoid harming their clients/patients… and to minimize harm where it is foreseeable and unavoidable.“

Canon 2A. An appearance of impropriety occurs when reasonable minds, with knowledge of all the relevant circumstances disclosed by a reasonable inquiry, would conclude that the judge’s honesty, integrity, impartiality, temperament, or fitness to serve as a judge is impaired. Public confidence in the judiciary is eroded by irresponsible or improper conduct by judges, including harassment and other inappropriate workplace behavior. A judge must avoid all impropriety and appearance of impropriety. This prohibition applies to both professional and personal conduct. A judge must expect to be the subject of constant public scrutiny and accept freely and willingly restrictions that might be viewed as burdensome by the ordinary citizen. Because it is not practicable to list all prohibited acts, the prohibition is necessarily cast in general terms that extend to conduct by judges that is harmful although not specifically mentioned in the Code. Actual improprieties under this standard include violations of law, court rules, or other specific provisions of this Code.

In order to achieve professional competence, we must establish standards of professional practice in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of attachment-related pathology surrounding divorce (“parental alienation”; AB-PA).

Mother is requesting the court to recognize these characteristic features of the pathology, such as the use of the word “forced” in characterizing the child’s visitations with the targeted parent (ACS-1), the empowerment of the child through statements like “the child should be allowed to decide on visitation” and the allied parent seeking the child’s testimony in court to reject the targeted parent (ACS-2), the exclusion demand of the child restricting the parent’s access to the child’s events (ACS-3), the unforgivable past event used as the justification for all current and future rejection of a parent (ACS-5), excessive texting and phone calls with the allied parent while the child is in the care of the targeted parent (ACS-9), and the continual disregard of Court orders for child custody and visitation (ACS-12). Once the Court is alerted to these symptom features, these characteristic signs of the pathology will begin to jump out in the declarations of the allied narcissistic/(borderline) parent.