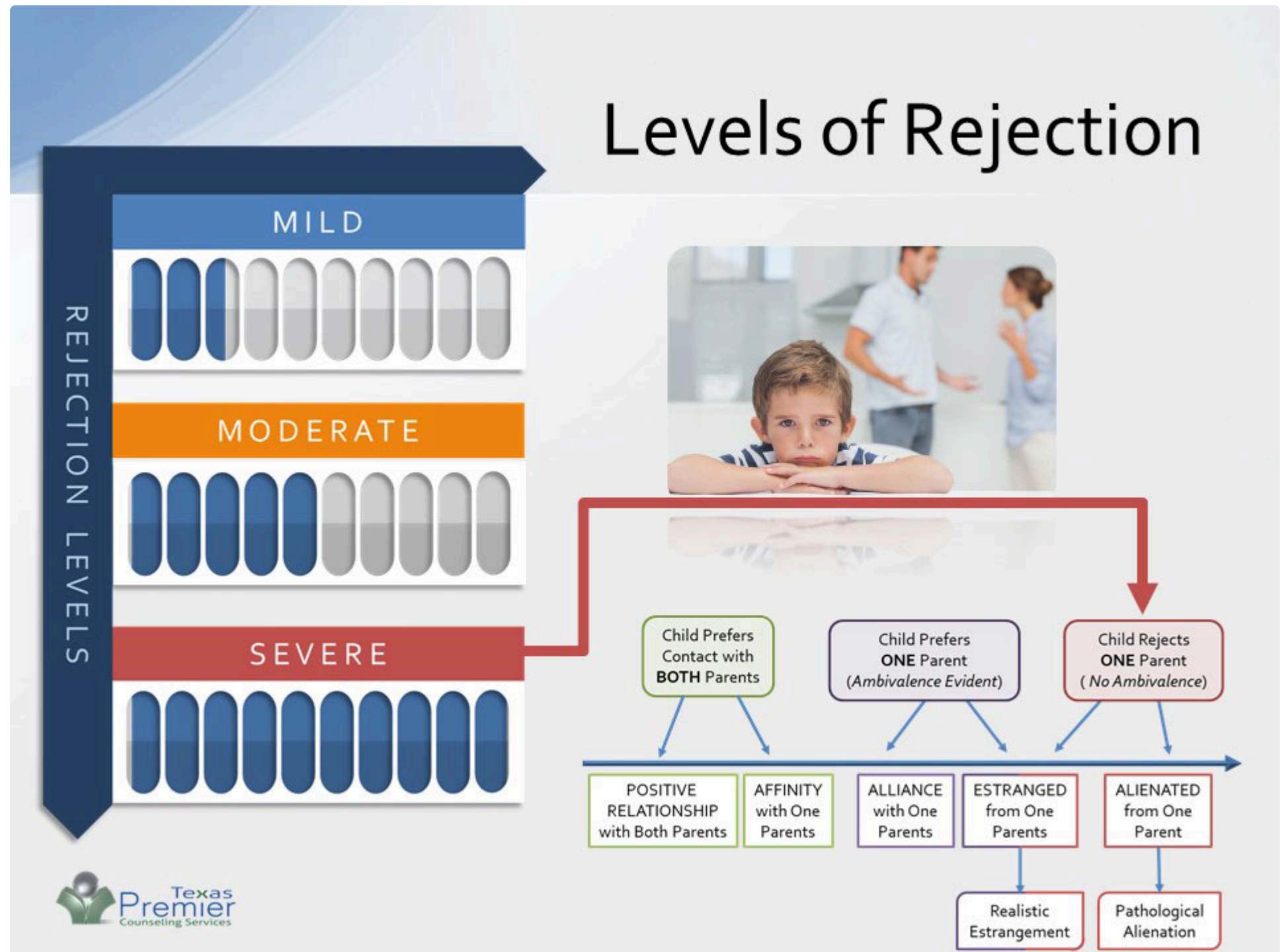


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Parental Alienation and Levels of Rejection

Monika Logan, M.A., LPC, LSOTP / 04/29/2018

Parental Alienation is when a child allies himself or herself strongly with one parent (*the preferred or favored parent*) and rejects a relationship with the other parent (*the alienated or rejected parent*). The rejection does not have legitimate justification. In other words, if a child rejects a parent because the parent has physically abused the child, this is not parental alienation.

Parental Alienation May be Mild, Moderate or Severe

- Mild Cases:** Occur when the child resists contact with the rejected parent but once the child is acclimated, the relationship resembles normalcy.
- Moderate Cases:** Occur when the child strongly resists contact and is persistently oppositional. The favored parent may intentionally or unintentionally make denigrating remarks about the other parent to the child.
- Severe Cases:** Occur when the child adamantly refuses contact, may hide, threaten to harm himself /herself, and/or runs away. In severe cases court orders are blatantly ignored by the favored parent.

- Secondly, parents may need both the help of an attorney and a mental health professional. When seeking the help of a mental health professional, you should ensure the therapist is experienced in treating both child psychological abuse as well as family systems.
- Lastly, it is also essential to verify that he/she has extensive documented experience and training applicable to treating parental alienation.

Citations:

- *A continuum of children's relationships with parents after separation and divorce.* ~ Adapted from Kelly & Johnston, 2001.
- *Parental Alienation: The Handbook for Mental Health and Legal Professionals.*

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The Texas Association of Family Forensics (TAFF) is a group of licensed independent mental-health professionals comprised of psychologists, social workers, and counselors. The group members primarily assist families and their children during and after litigation, including working through pre/post-separation stressors.

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