



Lynn Steinberg, Ph.D.,
LMFT MW18084

REUNIFICATION THERAPY FOR ALIENATED PARENTS AND CHILDREN
A four-day program with the goal of reunifying children with their Alienated Parent.

Parent Alienation describes a family dynamic in which a child denigrates and rejects a parent, (known as the Alienated Parent) in the absence of a reasonable or valid reason such as child abuse and neglect. The other parent (the Alienating Parent) brainwashes the child in order to sever the previously positive relationship between the Alienated Parent, and his/her child(ren).

This dynamic is unresponsive to traditional family therapy, therefore requiring that the family be ordered by a judge into Reunification Therapy, provided by a therapist trained in these dynamics.

THE REUNIFICATION PROGRAM:

Day 1: Review of family history –

The goal is to reconnect the child(ren) emotionally and remember the history between Alienated Parent and Child by reviewing photographs and mementos, etc. that depicted the positive relationship that existed between the parent and child(ren) preceding the Alienation. (This occurs remarkably quickly due to the child's instinctive loving feelings for the parent).

Day 2 and 3: Correcting the child's revisionist history -

Correcting misinformation and false allegations against the Alienated Parent through a frank and factual discussion is essential to the healing process, and vital to the mental health of the child(ren). The child will be supported in expressing his/her own genuine feelings for and beliefs about the alienated parent.

During this time the family will partake in meals and activities, organized and supervised by the parent. In addition, the Alienated Parent's extended and nuclear family is most likely also alienated and will be invited to participate in Day 3.

Day 4: Family activity (to be scheduled during the 3 days) –

The family is encouraged to take a trip together, or have an activity planned. At the end of the activity, we will reconvene and process the experience and shore up any gaps in the reunification between the Parent and Child(ren).

WHY REUNIFICATION IS ESSENTIAL TO THE CHILD'S HEALTHY BEHAVIORAL, COGNITIVE AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Emotional cutoffs are never an appropriate remedy for interpersonal conflicts— especially with respect to the vital parent/child relationship. Remaining with hatred and anger is not healthy under any circumstances, especially when directed at a parent.

2. How a child relates to and resolves conflicts with each parent is the single, most significant factor that will determine how the child interacts with peers, authority relationships, and adult relationships.

3. A child cannot develop healthy self-esteem if she/he perceives a parent to be evil, abusive, unloving, worthless, etc. Expert consensus recognizes that children think very concretely—"I am half my mother and half my father." The qualities the child attributes to parents are therefore introjected by the child and experienced as characterological to her/him.

4. If a child feels unloved *by a parent*, then the child cannot help but feel unlovable *in general* and will pursue the perilous goal of seeking love in all the wrong places.

5. Misperceptions and misconceptions about the rejected parent, the favored parent, and about the family history are often so extreme that they represent a break with reality. Cognitive stability is therefore put at risk if not corrected for the child.

6. It is anti-instinctual to hate and reject a parent—especially a loving parent. The child must therefore create an elaborate delusional system to justify the rejection—a highly dysfunctional condition.

7. The child is existing under a cloud of anxiety due to the fear that of a slip of the tongue or a slip of behavior will reveal the child's true loving feelings and need for the rejected parent. This situationally-caused anxiety is frequently mistaken for a chemical imbalance—and the child consequently receives inappropriate treatment, and perhaps unnecessarily prescribed psychotropic medications.

8. The rejection of a parent is essentially a loss—and one of the deepest kinds of all. Generally, the rejection extends to the rejected parent's family of origin so that loving grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins are likewise rejected. Losses of this magnitude often lead to depressive symptoms. These symptoms are, again, often assumed to be the result of a biochemical imbalance rather than being situationally caused. As a result, the child is often needlessly treated with powerful, psychotropic medications.

9. The rejecting child is subject to suffering from guilt because, at some point, the child recognizes that she/he has maltreated a parent. And if that parent is no longer available or even deceased to receive an apology—should the child become free to provide it—the guilt will last a lifetime.

10. The emotional hole left in the child from the loss of a parent is frequently filled with a great deal of negativity including, but not limited to: eating disorders, suicidal symptoms, self-cutting, criminal activities, oppositional and other antisocial behaviors, defiance, disrespect for other authority figures, cognitive distortion, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, other forms of emotional dysregulation, unhealthy peer relationships, underperformance in school, drug abuse, and a general malaise about one's life.

THE REJECTING OR ALIENATING CHILD(REN):

Children do not want to choose between parents. Even when a child is abused by a parent, that child wishes to maintain a relationship with the parent and the extended family. It is **ONLY** when there is coercion on the part of the Alienating Parent that a child completely rejects a parent and the extended family (i.e. a formerly adored grandparent).

THE FAVORED OR ALIENATING PARENT:

A 2013 American Bar Association study “Children Held Hostage: Identifying Brainwashed Children, Presenting a Case and Crafting Solutions” found that of 1000 children, 86% of divorcing parents brainwash their children against the other parent at least once a week, and 23% did it once a day. The Alienating Parent thrives on conflict. The other parent begins to suffer burnout, frustration and ultimately exhaustion, emotionally and financially. They do not cease until there are powerful sanctions.

THE REJECTED/ALIENATED PARENT;

This parent is the most prone to being misdiagnosed and deemed pathological. This is known as a “fundamental attribution error” perpetrated by clinicians, lawyers and court personal. The manifestation of the trauma of being denied access to one’s children is perceived as a personality trait as opposed to a state and stress reaction. Alienated parents are reacting to the trauma of rejection, humiliation and maltreatment by their beloved children.

FAMILY HEALING;

A healthy co-parenting relationship needs to be formed. This has to be supported by the courts, and genuinely supported by the Alienating Parent. A parent cannot simultaneously claim both genuine support and blame the children for failing to comply.

SEVERE ALIENATION:

The Treatment Protocol suggests a 90-day no-contact period between the Alienating Parent and the child. This frees the child from the untenable, traumatic position of loyalty conflict. The court is respectfully requested to schedule a review of the Alienating Parent’s behavior

in terms of supporting the reconciliation. If this parent is able to support it, some contact with the child(ren) can be reestablished.

Further information regarding the court order, the four-day program, fees, after care therapy, and the 90-day transfer of custody can be provided on request. Appearances in court can be arranged.

Dr. Lynn Steinberg

Trained in the Family Systems model, Dr. Steinberg works with families, couples, groups and individuals. She has specialized in working with children and adults abused as children for more than 40 years.

She worked in the courts as an expert on sexual abuse with children, adults and in the work place.

Her interest and background grew naturally to embrace the psychological abuse of Parent Alienation, which she has specialized in for the last 10 years. This includes false accusations of sexual abuse.

She offers a Four Day Intensive Family Reunification program for Alienated Parents and their alienated children.

She is an expert witness in Parent Alienation in the Children's Court and Family Court. She can also testify to the treatment of members of the Alienated Family and assist with Court Appearances.

Dr. Steinberg is also a trained Mediator and has mediated for the Superior Court.