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1/31/16

The Honorable <Representative>

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Dear Mr. <Representative>,

I am writing to express my deep appreciation for your support of legislation to protect children from the devastating emotional, psychological, and developmental effects of child psychological abuse. Your support for this legislation speaks volumes for your commitment to protecting the emotional and psychological well-being of children.

I am sending you my books *Foundations* and *The Narcissistic Parent* that will provide an overview into the importance of your support for this child abuse protection legislation. In *Foundations*, I describe the severe family pathology of “parental alienation,” where the narcissistic and borderline personality pathology of the parent manipulates and exploits the child as a weapon of revenge against the other spouse-and-parent. In order to exact a retaliatory revenge against the other spouse for the divorce, the narcissistic personality parent “weaponizes” the child as an instrument of revenge through subtly hidden manipulation and psychological control of the child.

In *The Narcissistic Parent*, I turn to the research literature of professional psychology to describe the severely destructive and deeply damaging parenting of the narcissistic parent. Through subtle and insidious techniques of psychological control and manipulation, the narcissistic/(borderline) personality parent responds to divorce by systematically destroying the loving bonds of shared affection between the child and the other parent, psychologically forcing the child to “take sides” in the spousal conflict surrounding the divorce.

In response to the spousal rejection inherent to divorce, the narcissistic parent engages in a relentless campaign of distorted psychological manipulation and control of the child to systematically and completely destroy the child’s bonds of love and affection toward the other parent, culminating in the child’s complete rejection of the formerly beloved targeted parent (a pathology called “parental alienation” in the general culture). This represents deeply abhorrent parenting by the narcissistic parent. Children are not weapons of revenge. Children have the right to love both parents, and to receive the love of both parents in return.

The family pathology of “parental alienation” is essentially an act by the narcissistic parent of psychologically “killing the children” of the other spouse in order to exact a retaliatory revenge on the ex-spouse for the divorce.

Narcissistic Parent: “I’ll show you. You’ll be sorry you divorced me. I’ll destroy your children’s love for you. Once I’m finished, they’ll hate you. They won’t want to have anything to do with you – ever. You won’t have your children anymore. You’ll be sorry you divorced me. You’ll see.”

The immense cruelty that underlies the family pathology of “parental alienation” is beyond comprehension; to psychologically kill the loving bonds of affection shared between the child and the other parent – to psychologically kill the other parent’s beloved children – as a means of exacting a retaliatory revenge on the ex-spouse for the divorce is unconscionable, and it represents a profound form of **child psychological abuse**.

In manipulating and psychologically controlling the child, the narcissistic parent creates significant psychopathology in the child:

1. **Severe Developmental Pathology:** The suppression of the child’s normal-range attachment bonding motivations toward a normal-range and affectionally available parent that will result in the loss of a healthy and bonded relationship with this parent and severely damaging developmental consequences for the child.
2. **Severe Personality Disorder Pathology:** The narcissistic parent creates in the child the same narcissistic traits that this parent holds toward the other spouse-and-parent, in which the child displays a haughty and arrogant attitude of contempt for the targeted parent and a cavalier absence of normal-range empathy and compassion that distorts the child into inflicting acts of immense emotional cruelty.
3. **Delusional Psychiatric Pathology:** Through manipulative and distorted parenting practices, the narcissistic parent creates in the child a rigidly held fixed and false belief (a delusion) regarding the child’s supposed “victimization” by the normal-range parenting of the targeted parent, a false belief that is then used to create feelings of hostility and rejection in the child toward the normal-range and loving targeted parent (the clinical psychology term for this fixed and false belief is an *encapsulated persecutory delusion*).

The creation of significant developmental pathology in the child (attachment system suppression), personality disorder pathology in the child (specific narcissistic and borderline personality traits), and delusional-psychiatric pathology in the child (an encapsulated persecutory delusion) in order to meet the emotional and psychological needs of the narcissistic parent represents a professional **DSM-5** diagnosis of **V995.51 Child Psychological Abuse, Confirmed**. The family pathology of “parental alienation” is not a child custody issue, it is a child protection issue.

This important legislation that will be introduced into the Florida legislature highlights to all mental health professionals the importance of assessing for and protecting children from the psychological child abuse inflicted on them by the pathogenic parenting of a narcissistic/(borderline) personality parent. Children’s healthy development depends on their right to love both parents, and their right to receive the love of both parents in return. This important legislation ensures that mental health professionals protect that right by protecting children from the psychological child abuse of a narcissistic parent’s pathology.

Sincerely,

Craig Childress, Psy.D.  
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