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It is a pleasure,

If a parent is giving you this letter from me, it is because you are assessing an attachment-related pathology surrounding a divorce.

The attachment system never spontaneously dysfunctions. It only becomes dysfunctional in response to pathogenic parenting (patho=pathology; genic=genesis, creation).

Pathogenic parenting¹ is the creation of significant psychopathology in the child through aberrant and distorted parenting practices.

Attachment-related pathology is always caused by pathogenic parenting.

In ALL cases of attachment related pathology surrounding divorce, mental health professionals should assess for pathogenic parenting as a professional standard of practice.

This parent is also providing you with two instruments to document the assessment for pathogenic parenting:

The Parenting Practices Rating Scale: Documents pathogenic parenting practices by the targeted-rejected parent (abusive parenting practices).

The Diagnostic Checklist for Pathogenic Parenting: Documents pathogenic parenting (as reflected in the child's symptom features) by an allied narcissistic/(borderline) parent who has formed a cross-generational coalition (Minuchin, Haley) with the child against the other parent.

When assessing for attachment-related pathology surrounding divorce, please consider using these two instruments to document your assessment for pathogenic parenting.

Since attachment-related pathology can only be created by pathogenic parenting from one parent or the other, evaluating for pathogenic parenting would represent a minimum standard of professional practice requirement when assessing attachment-related pathology surrounding divorce.

The attachment system² is the brain system that governs all aspects of love and bonding throughout the lifespan, including grief and loss. A child rejecting a parent is an attachment-related pathology.

¹ Pathogenic parenting is an established construct in both developmental and clinical psychology and is most often used in reference to attachment-related pathology, since the attachment never spontaneously dysfunction, but only becomes dysfunctional in response to pathogenic caregiving.

² Bowlby, J. (1969). Attachment and loss. Vol. 1. Attachment. NY: Basic Books.

Bowlby, J. (1973). Attachment and loss: Vol. 2. Separation: Anxiety and anger. NY: Basic Books.

Bowlby, J. (1980). Attachment and loss: Vol. 3. Loss: Sadness and depression. NY: Basic Books.