

# Parental Alienation International

Advancing worldwide understanding in the field of parental alienation

**pasg**  
www.pasg.info

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Parental Alienation Study Group

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## Best Wishes for the New Year

By Mandy Matthewson and Donna-Maria Logue

WELCOME TO THE FIRST ISSUE of the *Parental Alienation International* for 2022.

Firstly, I would like to welcome Donna-Maria Logue to the role of co-editor in chief of the *PAI*. Donna-Maria and I will work together with our column editors to keep bringing you the *PAI*. I look forward to working with Donna-Maria and sharing this role with her. Donna-Maria is the founder of La Dolce Vita Project in Derry City, Northern Ireland. In this issue, you will read more of the excellent work being carried out by La Dolce Vita Project and their beneficiaries on The Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill, The Protection from Stalking Bill and an All Island Parental Alienation motion within the *PAI* articles.

This issue of the *PAI* begins with Dr Bernet's annual review of 2021, detailing the wonderful accomplishments of 2021. You will find within the report resources available to you. There is also a section calling on PASG members to update their details. Information on how to do this and who to contact is provided.

Borja Brananova from Asturias, Spain, a member of CEMIN and Regional Ambassador for Contemporary Family Magazine (USA) explores his 5-year journey for Joint Custody within Dubai court, Broja continued work for Legislative Change. You will also read the Borja family case, the work of the team involved which was proposed for the Princess of Asturias nomination in the category of Concorde back in 2019.

Amanda Sillars, Founder of The Eeny Meeny Miney Mo Foundation, Australia details the background to setting up this foundation and Australia's Parental Alienation Day. She provides an update on support provided, webinars hosted and news on their recent petition to have parental alienating behaviours recognised as child abuse and family violence. Fantastic work indeed.

Sadly, this is Cindy Hirsch's last Targeted Parent Column. Cindy has been working with Josie Sinnamon on this column. We thank them both for their incredible work. In her final column, Cindy reflects on the accomplishments of the International Support Network for Alienated Families throughout 2021; acknowledging the great work of their founder Karen Lebow who sadly passed away earlier this year. *PAI* wish to take this opportunity to extend our condolences to her family and friends at ISNAF. Details and the links to Karen Lebow story, the work of ISNAF can be found within the column.

If you are interested in the role of editor of the Targeted Parent Column, please contact Dr Mandy Matthewson – [Mandy.Matthewson@utas.edu.au](mailto:Mandy.Matthewson@utas.edu.au)

Robert provides the Recent Publications Column with more interesting publications for us to read.

As you can see there is a mountain of fabulous work being conducted on parental alienation worldwide. We wish you all an abundance of health and wellness throughout 2022. Let us all continue working together in the best interest of our children.

Happy New Year. ■

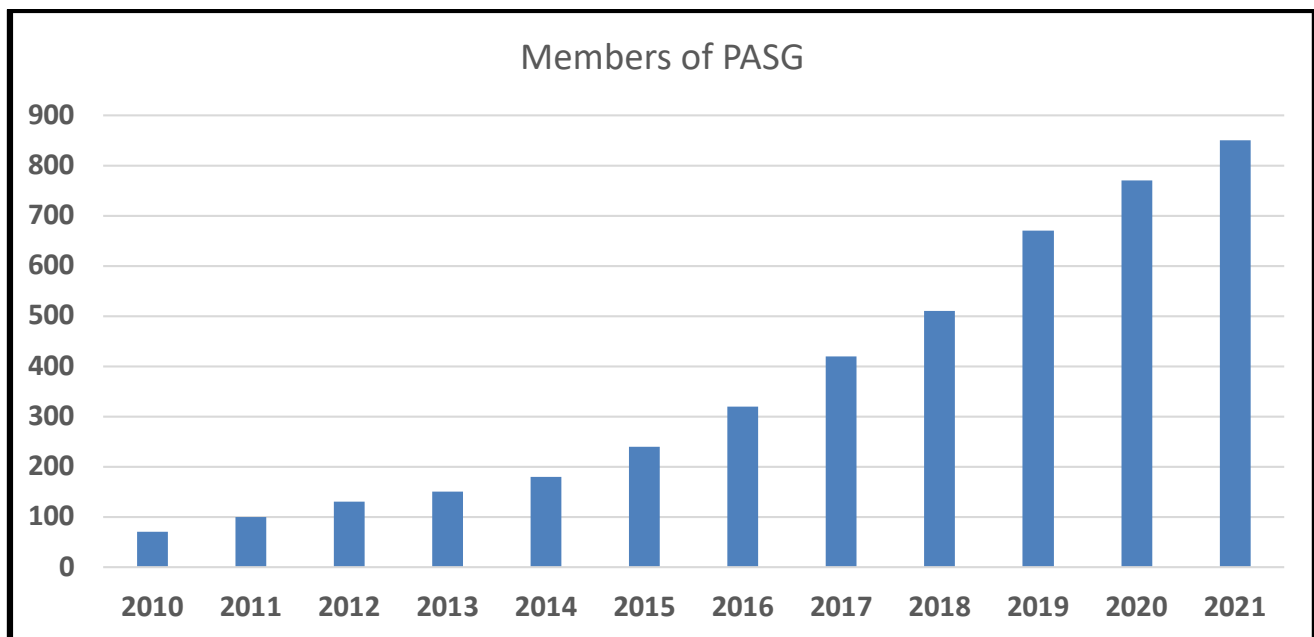
## PASG 2021: The Year in Review: Despite the Pandemic, PASG and Our Members Accomplished Important Goals and Achievements

*By William Bernet, President, Parental Alienation Study Group*

THE PARENTAL ALIENATION STUDY GROUP—and most other organizations—was constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic during 2021. Nevertheless, our members remained active and logged in important accomplishments virtually, if not face-to-face.

We originally planned for our conference to occur in Brussels, Belgium, in 2020. We had to postpone the event because of COVID-19, but PASG 2021 did occur in Brussels in September 2021. Most of the presenters and some audience members attended in person, but most participants engaged the conference online. The presentations were translated simultaneously into Dutch, German, French, and English.

The membership of PASG increases each year. Prospective members learn about PASG through our publications, our website, and by word-of-mouth from current members. We welcome members from the international community and now have representatives from 64 countries. During 2021, PASG added members from Guatemala, Singapore, and South Korea. We ended the year with about 870 members.



PASG members should check their own brief description (80-word limit) in the publicly accessible List of Members. Go to the website [www.pasg.info](http://www.pasg.info), then to Resources, and then select the page called PASG Members. Check the paragraph about yourself and if changes are desired, contact our secretary, Brian Hart, [brianhart123@gmail.com](mailto:brianhart123@gmail.com). Since this document is available to the public, let Brian know if you do not want to be listed there.

Also, on the public side of the website, visitors can find over 80 books published by PASG members. For individuals who may want to make a purchase, each individual book links to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or some other vendor. We try to keep this information up to date. Let me know if information about your book needs to be added or adjusted in some way. Contact me at [william.bernet@vumc.org](mailto:william.bernet@vumc.org).

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, there were important events and conferences in 2021 that addressed topics related to parental alienation:

- March 2021: A new magazine, *Contemporary Family*, was launched. See: <https://contemporaryfamilymagazine.com/>. The magazine was created by PASG member Mark Roseman and numerous PASG members have contributed articles.
- April 2021: Happy Parenting – Malta presented a one-day conference regarding parental alienation, both in person and online. Speakers included PASG members Brian O’Sullivan, Brendan Guildea, Philip Marcus, Shawn Wygant, and Charlie Azzopardi.
- April 2021: International Parental Alienation Awareness Day was observed throughout the world. PASG member Ricardo Simões created a unique poster that was endorsed by more than 50 organizations.
- May 2021: Family Access – Fighting for Children’s Rights held a two-day conference, “Helping Courts Understand the Phenomenon of Alienation.” Participants included PASG members Colleen Murray, Steven Miller, Ashish Joshi, Robert Hoffman, Linda Gottlieb, Jennifer Harman, and William Bernet.
- May 2021: Practitioners in St. Petersburg, Russia, organized the “International Scientific and Practical Conference on the Issue of Parental Alienation.”
- June 2021: The Nehru Centre, London, United Kingdom, presented a Global Parents Day Special Event, “Parental Alienation: A Silent Epidemic.” This program was organized by PASG member Rakesh Kapur.
- June 2021: Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) presented an online conference, “When a Child Rejects a Parent, Are We Part of the Problem or the Solution?”
- October 2021: Children 4 Tomorrow presented their 4th annual symposium, “Exposing the Deep Dark Roots of Parental Alienation.” PASG members who made presentations: Wendy Perry, Mark Roseman, Petra Deeter, Michelle Jones, and Stephen Morrison.
- November 2021: Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) held a conference—live—in Cincinnati, Ohio. PASG members Amy J. L. Baker, Jennifer Harman, Edward Kruk, and William Bernet participated.
- November 2021: International Men’s Day Conference occurred in Toronto, Canada. Participants included PASG members Jerome Teelucksingh and William Bernet.
- November 2021: The “Peaks of Parental Alienation” occurred near Obidza, Poland, in the mountainous area of that country. Social activists strive beyond political divisions to heal the legal and family situations of Polish children.
- November 2021: Family Access – Fighting for Children’s Rights presented “Coping with the Holidays – 2021.” Presenters included PASG members Steven Miller, Colleen Murray, Linda Gottlieb, and Robert Hoffman.

Finally, perhaps the most important event during 2021—related to parental alienation—was the inauguration of the world’s first academically accredited postgraduate course in parental alienation studies. This course is a collaboration between the Institute of Family Therapy in Malta and Parental Alienation Europe in Ireland. The course is presented in person and online over one weekend a month (Saturday and Sunday) for ten months. During 2021–22, the students came from Malta, Ireland, U.S., U.K., Canada, Iceland, Russia, New Zealand, Australia, and Hong Kong. If you want information regarding the course during 2022–23, contact Brian O’Sullivan at [brian@changes.ie](mailto:brian@changes.ie). ■

## Introducing New Co-Editor-in-Chief

*By Donna-Maria Logue*

I AM DELIGHTED TO JOIN the *PAI* and look forward to this new experience which I have no doubt will bring many new opportunities.

Let me tell you a little about me. I am a mother of 3 absolutely fabulous children. I am also a grandmother of 2 adorable little ones, who I must say melt my heart with just a smile. My children and grandchildren will always be the passion that drives my life daily. They are my guiding lights.

Professionally I am the founder and Director of Services of La Dolce Vita Project, non-gender domestic abuse and parental alienation charity based in the beautiful city of Derry, Northern Ireland.

I am a member of The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (MBACP). Currently advancing my professional training in mediation. I have gained over 7 years' experience working with people effected by domestic abuse, violence and or parental alienation.

Setting up La Dolce Vita Project was an easy choice. The very reason I set the charity up was based on my own lived experiences, no one was listening, there was a lack of insight, understanding and empathy among professionals. It scared me to my core. I became curious why those professionals whom many trust appeared to turn a blind eye to parental alienation and why so many within the domestic abuse sector would not acknowledge or accept its existence.

From my perspective as a mother, I had more than a story to share. Therefore, I made the decision to set the charity up on my own from my bedroom. It was very clear to me that if I didn't start to talk of the problems I had seen through my experiences of domestic abuse, services involved and the family courts, children were going to continue to be placed at risk of serious harm.

I made the decision to become in some way the solution because I had lived experience of or had been witness to mental health and legal professionals who were enabling parent child relationship problems to fester.

The journey of La Dolce Vita Project has been going from strength to strength since established in January 2016, despite lack of funding and working tirelessly to fundraise to keep our doors opened. I have created and adapted educational workshops, held conferences on parental alienation to raise public awareness on this serious child protection issue. To date I have successfully educated over 1500 beneficiaries in the topic of parental alienation.

Since September 2020 we have been actively campaigning to have a parental alienation motion passed across all councils within Northern Ireland and across Ireland seeing Derry City Strabane District Council passing the first motion of its kind, then a number of months later Fermanagh and Enniskillen District Council.

The aim was to have an all-island approach to the campaign. Alongside Alienated Children First, who progressed with the campaign within the south of Ireland have successfully seen 32 counties pass a similar motion. This campaign is ongoing.

Alongside Parental alienation Europe in November 2020 we hosted the first online parental alienation conference in Northern Ireland.

Over the years I have, alongside beneficiaries of La Dolce Vita Project, campaigned for the inclusion of parental alienation within The Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill.

Justice Minister Naomi Long comments on parental alienation (9th Dec 2021):

***“On the issue of parental alienation, one parent should never make use of a child to abuse the other parent. Therefore, consider it appropriate that patterns of this type of behaviour could be deemed to be abusive behaviour, and potentially captured by the new domestic abuse offence once it is in operation late February”.***

Extending on from the work on the domestic abuse and family proceedings bill, La Dolce Vita Project parental alienation sub-committee members are actively lobbying for a number of recommendations to be included in the up and coming Protection from Stalking bill.

Recommendation 1: To make use of a child to spy on, and or cause fear alarm or distress on to another.

Recommendation 2: To make use of a child communication devices to spy on another person to cause fear, alarm or distress.

I have been trained to write court position and witness statements which I have tailored within my own parental alienation consultancy work to support the parents I am blessed to walk this journey with.

I have never claimed to be an expert in the field of parental alienation, in fact I am very much in my infancy. With this said, my greatest learnings have been from the parents and grandparents who I am privilege to share their journey with.

It is an honour to now be a part of *Parental Alienation International* and wish to extend my sincere thanks to Mandy Matthewson and Bill Bernet for this welcomed opportunity. ■



**Donna-Maria Logue**

## A Courageous Fight for Joint Custody and Legislative Change

*By Borja Brañanova*

MY NAME IS Borja Brañanova. I am a Spanish father from the Asturias region. I was born in Oviedo, the capital city, in 1973. I grew up within a multidisciplinary family who positively influenced my development. The best I absorbed from all of them was a sense of altruism, respect for all and their personal contributions to others in connection with their careers, not expecting anything in return.

With the same social spirit and with a vision to contribute to major changes in the field of children's rights, I became a member of PASG, CEMIN (Spain) and later Regional Ambassador for Contemporary Family Magazine (USA). By doing so, I wish to encourage individuals globally to actively participate in a necessary respectful revolution in family laws wherever possible, with hope and without expectations. Currently, 60% of the world's population is under 15 years of age. Therefore, our goal and best interest is to benefit minors while supporting the contemporary emotional development of the larger portion of humanity and so on humanity's future.

For those interested in CEMIN, it is a Spanish interdisciplinary organization of social initiative. CEMIN offers interpretative and indicative criteria from an independent vision of what constitutes the best interests of children and teenagers in the different scenarios of professional intervention that condition their well-being: social, judicial, training, educational, and health areas. Web: <https://cemin.org/>

The motivation to join CEMIN and PASG is rooted in the fact that I faced a divorce in Dubai, UAE, where I live and work. Unfortunately, I had to learn like anyone else, the hard way, and before I came to know I was facing a divorce in an Islamic-Sharia Family Court, I began to experience many strange actions and behaviours in my family that directed me to request advice in the fields of psychology and psychiatry. I commenced to learn about cognitive behavioural therapies, and mental health issues, in particular depression and bipolar disorder.

The divorce proceedings started in 2016 and ended in 2020 (5 years). I learnt in the very beginning of 2015 that the possibility for me to be with my children from there on was legally almost impossible as our son was less than 2 years old and our daughter a few months old. The reason for that is the local jurisprudence and regulations, that assign different roles for men (guardian) and women (custodian). The usual is to assign sole custody to a woman till minors reach certain ages, and in the case of girls, till they marry a new man who will be the new guardian, shifting the guardianship from the father to the husband. In the case of family disputes and marriage dissolution, where families choose not to maintain ties, the children are assigned solely to one parent and are insulated from the other parent and their family with very few short visitations per month. Family counselling and guidance are unavailable.

As an expat in a Middle Eastern country, I found this situation unbearable, and seeing clearly that our children would lose the opportunity to grow as I had, I began to seek advice on how to deal with the situation and how to pursue a logical change, at least for the non-Muslim community. In Dubai, society is very diverse, so I did understand the complexity of having a common legal umbrella for all the residents and nationals. Polygamy and other cultural elements have an impact on family structure and the effects of dissolutions, so the legal system has mechanisms in place to ensure minors are assigned to a liable party and financial support is always assigned to the minors' guardians.

Due to the age of the children, the legal framework, and the lack of supportive jurisprudence in this regard, I had to perform differently, and I made the best decision of my life. I refuted to litigate confrontationally to apply for sole custody and I worked to demonstrate to the court system that it was not in the best interest of the children to be removed from either parent. In joint custody, all become winners, where in sole custody, many



losers arise and the most impacted are the children. When I took the stand to support my own descendants to be raised as I have been raised, I kept aside emotional elements and commenced to work out the case as if I was performing a professional project, being tactful to avoid offending local authorities.

I am a mining engineer specialized in energy and fuels by degree, however I never worked in the field. Professionally I have been working in managing projects and services for the last two decades and now I have entered the field of megaprojects. Luckily, I have interacted always with great interdisciplinary professionals that have also influenced my understanding. Furthermore, they showed me the path to pursue big achievements through long-term plans and to deal with complex pathways.

At the beginning of the case, I had to set a strategy, budget, and financing, so I decided to convert what I had on hand into resources to sustain a long-term litigation that I envisioned for 2-3 years assisted by a rationalized team. I always assumed that I needed to assemble the best possible team if I wanted to have a minimum chance of achieving anything, no matter how small it was. My motivation was the conviction that my children would benefit more from my presence in their lives than from me being just a financial supporter. Also, I found it evident that the court and authorities would never identify that there was a social issue by discriminating roles or assigning children to one parent only which is the standard procedure, if no one previously took the stand to substantiate all formally following precise legalisation procedures and referring to United Nations, International, European, Spanish, South African and UAE laws and procedural laws presented by senior professionals in their respective fields.

With a vision, mission, and strategy, I begun to research for outstanding professionals. It was not easy however after several months I got in touch with Isabel Winkels in Spain (a renowned expert in Spanish family law) and her associated Dr Flora Calvo (expert in private international law). They worked hard to submit the entire civil code from 1889, the Spanish Law explained and contemporary Jurisprudence in front of the Dubai Courts. Isabel always played the main role with regards to defending joint custody and through her other important team members gradually joined including Pilar Bueno a well-known family law attorney. Our main challenge was always to achieve submissions targets being fully compliant with legalisation processes passing through bar associations, ministries, embassies, and legal translations.

As the Sharia Court only functions in Arabic, I searched for a Dubai attorney, aiming for the best in town. After meeting several professionals and meeting him, I immediately knew he was perfect, so I asked him if he was willing to work on promoting a change beyond the standards, collaborating with an international team located overseas. He immediately accepted. Thus, I joined efforts with Mukhtar Al Gharib, an outstanding professional in 2005 UAE Federal family law. We joined his entire team, a great group of people. Ahmed Al Rahoud (Syrian) was our main support in merging local and overseas information and presenting the case in an acceptable form and content in front of the Islamic judges. Mukhtar litigated as lead, representing the case with passion and courage. They both promoted a research book compiled by Ahmed "Provisions of custody in the Arabic and Foreign Laws" put together to show the main gaps between Middle East family laws and other internationally accepted family laws aiming to promote local changes in the UAE Federal Law and procedures either for locals or non-locals.

As our children are also South African nationals, we worked with Ferdi Herzenberg, an excellent family law professional. He added to the team other South African psychologists and multidisciplinary professionals to assist with demonstrating that child family laws in both nations pursue the same thing, the child's best interest, and so joint custody is the most preferred option.

In Spain, we also worked with Dr. Alvaro Rivera, a fantastic professional that supported us throughout the entire case with reports and risk assessments substantiating many aspects in the field of psychology and

psychiatry. Dr Rivera helped me to understand the many strange things that I was experiencing in the family before and during the proceedings. From this, I came to get in touch with another PASG member, Dr Jose Manuel Aguilar Blanco. Dr. Aguilar generously supported me, and as a result, I took the step with several Dubai psychologists and a great friend from France to request approval to establish the NGO named PASA (Parental Alienation Syndrome Association). Approval was granted, but only to provide social services and not to be a consulting or educating body for local authorities and entities related to children's affairs. Fortunately, Dubai Community Development Authority "CDA" Human Rights took the lead in performing this activity, and thus children's rights and all the precepts available in the UN convention on the child were listened to.

Returning to our case, we requested through UAE Federal Law the application of Spanish law and so we introduced gender equality, joint custody as per Spanish Constitution and Jurisprudence, South African Law to show a legal alignment with the children national laws, UN Convention of the Children and Wadeema, the UAE Law of the Children to explain in full children's best interests, plus many psychological and psychiatric reports showing issues with regards to emotional development. Additionally, we submitted many more documents to demonstrate the major interest of the father in raising the children in joint custody together with the mandatory defence in a conflicting litigation process. The UAE System follows a confrontation model to demonstrate culpability and damages to the divorcing party because divorce is not automatically granted. Our process started in 2016 and our divorced was granted in 2019.

The first instance judgement (April 2017) came out full of defects and due to a lack of jurisprudence in the UAE, sole custody was given to the mother and I was declared culpable. This decision boosted many alienation tactics and undermined my role as father. I became just a provider in front of the legal system. Fortunately, due to a dispute over the household usage and ownership, we remained living all together in separate rooms during all the proceedings giving me the opportunity to be near the children for the next four (4) years before we finally split and joint custody was granted. My commitment to be close to the children was visible in the hearings. The judges saw my strong commitment to stand still even under great pressure and with almost no possibility to succeed. We faced proceedings every week or every three weeks for more than 50 consecutive months of our lives.

The first instance ruling was strongly appealed by two very well-known Spanish supreme court judges Xavier O'Callaghan and Jose Almagro, plus international law attorneys and human rights attorneys. So, by joining the forces of a large multidisciplinary team together with the local team aligning the matters, we really called to attention the entire UAE judiciary system and leadership. The appealing judgment came out in November 2018.

**This was the first joint custody declared in a litigation procedure in an Islamic Sharia Court. This is an unprecedented historical decision.**

Fortunately, the Court of Appeals panel consisted of reasonable judges who declared joint custody and also decided a fair approach to child support. However, it was raised to cassation by the parties with different objectives, so the Court of Cassation issued an unprecedent Legal Doctrine that mixed the Appeal judgement with UAE Federal Law and issued a new judgement that exempted the mother from support obligations in full as it is standard in Sharia. The most significant event was the declaration of the joint custody as accepted after confirming that there was no clash with Islam, Sharia, and Prophet teachings, and so **became the first legal doctrine on the joint custody subject for Dubai and UAE**. Since then, joint custodies are accepted in Dubai.

The whole case became well known by the media and by the Spanish government. In 2018, the Court system accepted a petition by the mother to issue a travel ban and so the children could not travel to Spain with me. The Spanish Embassy was supportive and requested UAE MOFA to look into this as it was considered not rational to keep children insulated from their home country and ties due to cultural or Islamic legal effects.

Later in 2019, the whole case, the team, the immediate effects, and the potential positive future effects on children, was proposed for the Princess of Asturias nomination in the category of Concorde 2019 by CEMIN. That year the winner was the candidacy presented by the President of the European Union, the Polish city of Gdansk, “2019 Princess of Asturias Award for Concord.” <https://www.fpa.es/interactives/the-city-of-Gdansk>

In 2021, Abu Dhabi has decided to go ahead with a very innovative family law for non-Muslim legalising joint custody.

My children and I are currently preparing our first visit to Spain this Christmas after following a Court procedure to temporarily lift the travel ban that will be reset after our return. ■



### **Find PASG on Facebook**

You can find PASG on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParentalAlienationStudyGroup/>

Visit our Facebook page, become a friend, and write a comment.

## News From Australia: Update from the Eeny Meeny Miney Mo Foundation

*By Amanda Sillars and Mandy Matthewson*

PARENTAL ALIENATION AUSTRALIA, trading as the Eeny Meeny Miney Mo Foundation (EMMM) is a not-for-profit charity supporting people affected by parental alienation and raising awareness of it. For those of you unfamiliar with our organisation, I created a support group in 2014 while I was coming to terms with my own experience of being an alienated child and targeted parent. I was meeting with targeted parents worldwide who were in the same helpless situation, suffering in silence. In 2015, EMMM was incorporated, and I met Dr Mandy Matthewson who was conducting research into parental alienation. I was a parent that wanted to turn trauma into triumph by helping others recognise they were experiencing family violence instead of us all being swept under the mat. I knew we needed to educate people and do research here in Australia. Meeting Mandy helped us all validate that what was happening to each and every one of us was so wrong. Mandy never judged or ignored our pain as everyone else had done. Together, Mandy and I had the passion for making change and we were looking in the same direction. So, we formed a life saving partnership. You can read more about our collaboration [here](#).

EMMM has changed lives, saved lives, and helped children and parents reunite. In 2016, after holding a poll in the EMMM support group, we decided Australia needed our own Parental Alienation Awareness Day because Parental Alienation International Awareness Day conflicts with our ANZAC Day. Aligned with Australia's Mental Health Week, our first official Parental Alienation Awareness Day in Australia (#PAADay) was launched on 12th October 2016. For more information, go [here](#).

In 2021, we launched our Change petition to have parental alienating behaviours to be recognised as child abuse and family violence. To support our petition, please go [here](#).

We also:

- Provided support to 1230 people via the national online 24hr support group.
- Provided support to 2239 people via the global online 24hr support group.
- Provided support to 329 people via the New Zealand online support group.
- Provided approximately 3200 hours of individual phone counselling support.
- Delivered 28 online group support meetings.
- Delivered an 8 module webinar series for targeted parents.
- Engaged in international collaborations with online support and informational events for parents and practitioners.
- Provided Q&A events with other PA international organisations for targeted parents.
- Circulated the latest international evidence-based research on PA through Facebook and LinkedIn
- Raised \$11,400 in fundraising efforts.

In 2022, we have a new Board of Directors, and we have released our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. To find out more, please go to [www.emmm.org.au](http://www.emmm.org.au)

2022 will be another big year moving towards our vision for children to be free to love and spend time with both parents and for children to be free from child abuse and family violence including being manipulated by one parent to unjustifiably reject the other parent. ■

## ISNAF Offers Courage, Strength and Hope: International Support Network for Alienated Families

*By Cindy Hirsch*

AS WE BEGIN THE NEW YEAR, we invite you to look at the progress that has been made in the parental alienation (PA) community. While we all know there is still a long journey ahead of us, it is important to be grateful for the accomplishments thus far.

As a support group ISNAF offers education, support, awareness and advocacy through the meetings and programs for targeted family members. We have worked with parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, stepparents, and significant others since 2008.

I would like to take a moment to honor our founder Karen Lebow LMFT who passed away this October. She was alienated from three daughters. We are glad to report her youngest daughter was her caretaker the end of her life. It was her that contacted us to tell us of Karen's passing. ISNAF has invited her to tell her reunification story next year. If you would like to know more about Karen, please visit our [YouTube channel](#) where she tells the story of ISNAF and her alienation journey. ISNAF is forever grateful to Karen for all the work and support she offered families dealing with PA. I am personally grateful to have known her.

ISNAF has had the opportunity to work with thousands of parents dealing with PA. It is from firsthand knowledge in being targeted and reunited parents ourselves that we continue to develop our programs and services. All our services and programs focus on educating, healing, and empowering the targeted parent or family member while encouraging parents to treat their children with love, compassion, and dignity.

Through our monthly support meetings, we offer interactive conversations with others dealing with similar circumstances. It is in these meetings that parents begin to understand they are not alone. We use the mantra "You didn't Cause it, you can't Cure it and You can't Control it" which offers an easy-to-understand slogan for parents to remind themselves they are not the failure when the courts, therapists, teachers, DCF, police departments etc. do not understand what is happening to their children. Realizing they are not at fault, nor do they have power over this beast called PA helps get them to acceptance and stop the negative narratives and blaming themselves. It's bad enough the community at large blames them, they don't need to contribute to this type of psychological abuse for themselves. Once parents realize they are not alone their journey of healing begins.

This year we launched a series of "Professionals Speak" presentations from many of the most knowledgeable professionals in PA. This was well received and became a great educational forum with the ability to get questions answered from professionals. We look forward to our presentations next year. "Knowledge is power" is another slogan we use as we help parents get the information they need to manage their cases effectively and make important decisions.

Another tool ISNAF has created is a 137-page Handbook that has been distributed internationally for parents to understand everything they need to know about dealing with PA. The Handbook has served as a workbook for many to help their attorneys' families and friends understand their circumstances. Having the Handbook also validates the parents experience by having the published checklists, articles and white papers describing their experience helping them realize this is not unique to their family.

In 2019 ISNAF launched our PA Grief Program which we are most proud of. We have worked with over 150 parents to help them understand grief, work through their pain, and get to acceptance and forgiveness. It is in this program that we offer twenty-five coping tools to help parents deal with difficult emotions in a healthy manner. We have observed the greatest amount of growth for those dealing with the devastation of losing their children to PA through this program. In the program we empower parents to distinguish the difference between

pain and suffering which helps them minimize their own suffering. We discuss the importance of doing their work to heal from the pain of loss from PA to be available for their children to return into their lives. Our program discusses at length the impact of trauma on both the children and the targeted parent with the intention to help parents understand that the children too are in pain from the losses in their own lives. The end of the program works on creating possibilities for the future. A future with Love, Compassion and Dignity. Parents leave this program feeling empowered even with their PA circumstances.

After doing the Grief Program parents wanted to continue in the work and community of ISNAF so we developed PA Roundtables. These are designed to be done as a focus group with topics such as Reunification Strategies, Boundaries, Legal Strategies, Negotiation and Effective Communication Skills. We continue to listen to the needs of our participants and develop more topics that meet their needs. Parents have reunited with their children, learned tools for representing themselves in court, learned powerful negotiation techniques as well as several other important tools for navigating through their PA circumstances. The Roundtables are extremely popular as parents work closely with others over the course of four weeks with goals and objectives while supporting one another.

Another service offered this year is Parent Coaching. Due to popular demand, we now have one to one coaching session with parents regarding challenges they may be facing. Often they just need someone to help them understand the PA community so they can make educated decisions in their cases. In our coaching we have collaborated with parents in understanding their children's defiant behavior, dealing with their legal matters and the mental health community, while encouraging them to maintain their own wellbeing. After losing access to their children and not being understood in their communities, they begin the stages of grief and go into isolation. Helping empower parents is one of ISNAF's greatest accomplishments.

Finally, ISNAF has created a Judges Handbook throughout this year and will distribute it to Judges in 2022. There have been many professionals that have worked with ISNAF to help us develop the information and strategic distribution which will take place this year.

ISNAF looks forward to continuing to support families dealing with PA. May every alienated child find their way back to the families that love them. #Every child deserves to love BOTH parents. We invite you to visit our web site [isnaf.info](http://isnaf.info), follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/isnaf) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/isnaf). ■



### **You can earn money for PASG effortlessly.**

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*Compiled by Robert Ferrer, PASG Archivist*

IN THIS SECTION, ROBERT FERRER, PASG Archivist, provides citations and abstracts for recently published articles related to parental alienation. The citations are entered into the searchable [Parental Alienation Database](#), also accessible from the [PASG website](#). **Many citations will provide access to the full-text version of the article.** To have an article considered for this section, email Robert Ferrer at [r-ferrer@illinois.edu](mailto:r-ferrer@illinois.edu)

**Note from R. Ferrer:** The following articles are from critics who recycle familiar misinformation rhetoric regarding Parental Alienation. They associate allegations of Parental Alienation as the manipulations of child abusers and batterers to control their spouses and mislead the justice system.

## REJECTING 'UNJUSTIFIED' REJECTION: WHY FAMILY COURTS SHOULD EXCLUDE PARENTAL ALIENATION EXPERTS

<https://protect-au.mimecast.com/s/ECbhCjZryVCnGLOOjh5ov2c?domain=1drv.ms>

**By:** Alyssa G. Rao. Boston College Law Review. May 2021, Vol. 62 Issue 5, pgs. 1759-1796. 38p.

**Abstract:** Parental alienation is a controversial and disputed proposed mental disorder whereby children unjustifiably reject one parent because of the other parent's influence. One parent often raises parental alienation in family court when the other parent makes an accusation of domestic abuse. Despite appearing in the legal discourse, no professional organization officially recognizes either parental alienation or the related concept of parental alienation syndrome, the original anti-feminist theory from which parental alienation derives. Domestic violence advocates staunchly criticize both "disorders" because the theories can undercut legitimate and concerning abuse allegations. Nonetheless, courts invite such experts into the courtroom to aid in making custody determinations. This Note argues that parental alienation expert testimony does not meet state evidentiary standards for admissibility. This Note also suggests that courts should be cautious when considering abuse allegations, as the consequences of a mistaken court decision can be dangerous for children and survivors of domestic violence.

**Subjects:** Parental alienation syndrome; Syndromes in children; Family law courts; Domestic violence; Legal status of children

## Obey the justice system or protect children? The moral dilemma posed by false parental alienation syndrome

<https://protect-au.mimecast.com/s/JG5ECk8vzVfOXYwwnT9TqYd?domain=1drv.ms>

**By:** Miguel Clemente and Dolores Padilla-Racero. Children and Youth Services Review 120 (Jan. 2021) 105728, pgs. 1-11, 11p. DOI: 10.1016/j.chilgyouth.2020.105728

**Abstract:** This work focuses on the ethical dilemma involving whether to defend children and obey the law when a judge determines that a parent should deliver the child to the other parent although the parent is aware that the child is being abused by the other parent, which could not be determined by the justice system. A study was conducted based on the Milgram Experiment regarding obedience to authority. The participants comprised 480 adult mothers who had not experienced having had custody of their children revoked by the justice system. An ad hoc questionnaire was created to gather socio-demographic data to present a fictitious situation extracted from real legal cases in which a mother's custody of her daughter was revoked, and the SCL-90-R scale. The results demonstrate how women who are separated from their children display the same behavior that would be displayed by any mother defending her children. Milgram's paradigm of Obedience to Authority (OTA) would not work, and the results are more consistent with the so-called Relationship Condition. Taking children away from their mothers causes serious psychological damage and unscientific theories should not be used to address child abuse.

**Subjects:** Child abuse; Child protection; Milgram paradigm; Moral dilemmas; Parental alienation; Parental Alienation Syndrome ■

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## About the Parental Alienation Study Group

Parental Alienation Study Group, Inc. (PASG) is an international, not-for-profit corporation. PASG has over 800 members—mostly mental health and legal professionals—from 62 countries. The members of PASG are interested in educating the general public, mental health clinicians, forensic practitioners, attorneys, and judges regarding parental alienation. PASG members are also interested in developing and promoting research on the causes, prevention, evaluation, and treatment of parental alienation.

## About *Parental Alienation International*

*Parental Alienation International* (PAI) is published bimonthly by PASG. PAI seeks to lead and promote the scholarly discussion and debate concerning parental alienation practice, research, prevention, education, and advocacy to promote development of informed practice and policy in this field.

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