





further abuse. The child himself may echo the allegations of the mother, appearing to believe that he has been abused.

The damage to a child of a mother adopting a strategy of alienation is both insidious and long

and held to be completely unfounded. The mother continued to insist that she wanted contact to take place but that it had to be supervised at all times.

Is there any effective treatment for the parent who alienates? The view of a leading British psychologist is that there is treatment available but that its effectiveness depends upon it being long-term, psychoanalytically informed therapy (in the order of years rather than months), and upon the alienating parent acknowledging the problem and following the therapy programme. Therapy is based on teasing out and understanding the parent's unconscious mental process and how these affect day-to-day functioning, in order to change personality structure and bring a resolution to the underlying problem.

The difficulty is that if the child remains with this parent during the process of treatment, it may be some time before contact with the absent parent is re-established. It is for this reason that immediate removal of the child is advocated by experts. This is a Draconian solution and one which a judge may be reluctant to adopt, but it may be in the child's best interests in the long term to be removed from the insidious influence of an alienating parent.

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