

THE PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME IS NOT THE SAME AS PROGRAMMING (“ BRAINWASHING”)

It has come as a surprise to me from reports in both the legal and mental health literature that the definition of the PAS is often misinterpreted. Specifically, there are many who use the term as synonymous with parental “brainwashing” or “programming.” No reference is made to the child’s own contributions to the victimization of the targeted parent. Those who do this have missed an extremely important point regarding the etiology, manifestations, and even the treatment of the PAS. The term PAS refers only to the situation in which the parental programming is *combined with* the child’s own scenarios of disparagement of the vilified parent. Were we to be dealing here simply with parental indoctrination, I would have simply retained and utilized the terms *brainwashing* and/or *programming*. Because the campaign of denigration involves the aforementioned *combination*, I decided a new term was warranted, a term that would encompass both contributory factors. Furthermore, it was the child’s contribution that led me to my concept of the etiology and pathogenesis of this disorder. The understanding of the child’s contribution is of importance in implementing the therapeutic guidelines described in this book.