The following chapter is from the book by Joan T. Kloth-Zanard, "Where Did I Go Wrong? How Did I Miss the Signs? Dealing with Hostile Aggressive Parenting and Parental Alienation"

CHAPTER 12

STATISTICAL INFORMATION FROM MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

RESEARCH, DR. AMY J. BAKER AND DR. LOWENSTEIN, DR. KRUK OF CANADA MARCH 2009

Recently, Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) conducted a research project on the effects of High Conflict Divorce on the children. What they discovered was an overwhelming and profound impact on the emotional wellbeing of the children. The age of the child did not matter. The anxiety of the high conflict divorce was devastating. In their minds, no matter the age, they think, "If Mommy and Daddy no longer love each other, then will they stop loving me too?" This fear ultimately leads to anxiety, which invariably can cause an emotional meltdown at various levels. MGH also discovered that the more the parents fought or were at odds with each other, the more intense or disturbed the children became mentally and emotionally. And the more disturbed and upset the children became, the more their emotional well-being was affected. The following are the statistical results from MGH's project on the Impact of High Conflict Divorce on Children:

- 65% had anxiety severe enough to require therapy
- 56% Developed Attachment disorder;
- 48% had abnormal fears and phobias;
- 44% of both boys and girls became physically aggressive;
- 31% had sleep disorders
- 29% withdrew from activities including ones that they loved to do
- 24% developed opposition defiant behavior, including temper tantrums and uncontrolled outbursts
- 21% prematurely became involved in sexual activity
- 13% began bed wetting
- 10% developed dissociative personality disorders (once known as multiple personality disorders)

Amy J. Baker, Ph.D backs this up with her research in her article, *The Cult of Parenthood: A Qualitative Study of Parental Alienation, Cultic Studies Review* and in her

book, *Adult Children of Parental Alienation Syndrome – Breaking the Ties that Bind (2007).* Dr. Baker's research and interviews of 38 adults who were victims of PAS as children revealed seven (7) precedents about the effects of PAS. Furthermore, as Baker points out, these abused interviewees suffered lifelong pain as a result of being alienated from a once loved parent (36). Ms. Baker's results from her interviews are as follows:

- High rates of low self-esteem to a point of self-hatred
- 70 % of the adults suffered with serious depression episodes in their adult life.
- 30% had substance abuse problems with drugs and alcohol
- 42% had trust issues with themselves and/or others
- 50% were alienated from their own children, thus proving that PAS is multigenerational
- 66% had been divorced and of those, 25% were divorced more than once
- And the last pattern was Identity issues

Dr. F. L. Lowenstein of Southern England Psychology Services also describes the problems that the child of PAS suffers. His list includes:

- Anger
- Loss or lack of impulse control in conduct
- Loss of self confidence and self esteem
- Clinging in separation anxiety
- Developing fears and phobias
- Depression and suicidal ideation
- Sleep disorders
- Eating disorders
- Educational problems
- Enuresis
- Encopresis
- Drug abuse
- Self destructive behavior
- Obsessive compulsive behavior
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Damaged sexual identity problems
- Poor peer relationships
- Excessive feelings of quilt.

According to Dr. Edward Kruk, associate professor of social work at the University of British Columbia, whose three-year study is now in the hands of Canada's justice minister, "Some 85 per cent of youth in prison are fatherless; 71 per cent of high school dropouts grew up without fathers, as did 90 per cent of runaway children. Fatherless youth are also more prone to depression, suicide, delinquency, promiscuity, drug abuse, behavioral problems and teen pregnancy", warns the 84-page report, which is a compilation of dozens of studies about divorce and custody, including some of his own research over the past 20 years. I believe that this statistic about the Harm of Fatherless Families will soon include Motherless families where PAS is concerned, thus making these statistics ominous and of serious concern. Though the stats on Motherless families related to PAS have not had a chance to be studied, I can almost guarantee that the stats

would be quite similar where PAS is involved. It is not just the lack of a father or mother, (think families where a father or mother has passed away in an intact family), but instead think about the psychological abuse from PAS which pushes these kids to react so horribly.

What this means is that these children are losing the battle to have a normal life. Because of the anxiety disorder, which leads to attachment disorders, they never learn how to have a normal emotional relationship with others. If the fighting continues, the child has no choice but to spiral out of control, becoming more and more anti-social in their behavior and responses. Ultimately, if the war is not ended, the weaker of these children can and will end up with personal and mental problems for the rest of their lives. This is why it is so important for parents to put aside their differences, angers and need for retaliation/revenge. This is why a program like PIPI, Prevention and Intervention Program Initiative is so important. If we can get to these parents before this happens, then we can stop the ravages of high conflict divorce on the children.

For more information go to the following websites:

http://paao-us.com/StatsandCharts.asp

http://www.prevent-abuse-now.com/stats.htm

Citations:

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