



Photograph by Sabine Sauermaul: <https://all-free-download.com/free-photos/download/more-time-for-children-205758.html>

## GOING BEYOND THE GENDER PARADIGM:

### A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT, FAMILY VIOLENCE, AND FATHERING AFTER SEPARATION

Edward Andrew Kruk



#### ABSTRACT

*This article focuses on the intersection of interparental conflict, family violence, and fathering after parental separation. We review key research findings related to this intersection, including general family violence research, as well as parenting-after-separation-specific family violence research. We then examine the core components of responsible father involvement in children's lives after parental separation, including shared parental responsibility for children, in light of these findings. Finally, we discuss recommendations for socio-legal reform, as well as for therapeutic practice, aimed at the reduction of interparental conflict and prevention of family violence during and after parental separation, to enable fathers to share parental responsibility in the best interests of children and the post-separation family.*

**Keywords:** fathering, family violence, interparental conflict, parental separation, shared parenting



---

## INTRODUCTION

Debates related to the intersection of interparental conflict, family violence, intimate partner violence (IPV), and fathering after separation are among the most contentious in the arena of child and family policy and practice. During the family separation process, the safety and well-being of children and parents are at stake when high interparental conflict and family violence are issues of concern. The feasibility of shared parenting and enhanced father involvement in particular are contentious in these cases. Some believe that shared parenting and father involvement may need to be curtailed to lessen children's exposure to conflict (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2023; Jaffe et al., 2008). Others maintain that the well-being of children and parents is largely contingent on maintaining positive attachments and relationships between children and both parents, and that shared parental responsibility is vital in this regard (Nielsen, 2018; Warshak, 2014; Fabricius et al., 2012).

In regard to family violence, although there is little scientific consensus regarding the extent of IPV or its gender directionality, there is less debate in regard to parenting arrangements in the context of family violence. The responsibility to protect victimized children and parents in family violence and IPV situations takes precedence over other considerations, and shielding children and parents from violence entails safety being the overriding concern in the legal determination of parenting arrangements. Differentiating between family violence and more common interparental conflict is also vital. This poses challenges, however, given recent shifts in and expansions of definitions of family violence (Leemis et al., 2022; Harman et al., 2018; Hines et al., 2015). Unpacking these terms is vital to socio-legal policy reform and effective therapeutic intervention to ensure the safety and well-being of all family members.

Recent research has reported an increase in mothers' experiences of family violence when shared parenting arrangements are ordered after separation, including physical violence as well as coercive control (Meier, 2020); and feminist scholars have found that screening of family violence is often overlooked in family law disputes (Archer-Kuhn et al., 2023). Some assert that mental health practitioners lack sufficient education on conducting family violence screening assessments and in-depth knowledge of the nature, dynamics, and impact of family violence (Meier et al., 2019). There is general agreement that evidence-based family policies and clinical interventions to address the legal, emotional and psychological dimensions of family violence within a systematic approach that embraces the complete ecology of family violence are urgently needed.

Family violence has been defined as any form of abuse, maltreatment, or neglect perpetrated towards another family member, including adults and children (Department of Justice Canada, 2022), and encompasses both physical violence and coercive control. Family violence is an umbrella term that includes IPV and child maltreatment, as well as physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, and economic abuse. The Wingspread Conference (ver Steeg & Dalton, 2008) distinguished among coercive control, violent resistance, situational couple violence, and separation-instigated violence. In the context of child custody disputes, it is particularly important to distinguish between a long-standing pattern of controlling violence and situational couple violence.

Over the past quarter century, traditional ideas about interparental conflict, family violence and IPV have been scrutinized, leading many to conclude that outdated conceptualizations of IPV are a significant factor in perpetuating the problem of IPV, posing



---

ongoing challenges for effective intervention (Saini et al., 2023; Dutton, 2012; Spencer et al., 2022). Clinging to antiquated ideas such as the gender paradigm of family violence (which posits that IPV is primarily a unidirectional phenomenon involving male perpetrators and female victims, with family violence essentially a patriarchal mechanism of control and superiority), and gender paradigm-based interventions such as the Duluth model of family violence intervention, underscores the need for a radical restructuring of how IPV is addressed in contemporary society (Dutton, 2012; McNeely et al., 2001; Brown, 2004). Further, according to Mills (2009), we must also attend to the “ground zero” of IPV: how personal experiences and projections in regard to family violence affect one’s understanding. In addition, recognizing the systemic roots of IPV and implementing structural reforms are crucial elements in understanding and addressing IPV as a social problem (Russell & Hamel, 2022).

A component of current controversies regarding the adoption of evidence-based approaches to addressing IPV has been the lack of coordination among the disparate social systems involved in the field of family violence, including academicians and legal and mental health professionals, who often find themselves polarized in regard to needed policy reforms and best therapeutic practices (Russell & Hamel, 2022). As the Canadian Research Centre on Family Violence has asserted, the key to reducing and working toward the elimination of IPV is to address the issue openly and directly (Gill, 2006). Open dialogue is critical toward achievement of the goals of reduction of interparental conflict and the prevention of family violence in all its forms, particularly IPV in the context of parental separation and the living arrangements of children in these situations (International Council on Shared Parenting, 2020).

### SEVEN DIRECTIONS TO OVERCOME THE IMPASSE

In the realm of legal determination of children’s living arrangements after parental separation in contested cases, the degree of interparental conflict and presence of IPV are central considerations in the assessment of children’s needs and the best interests of children and families. In addition to the safety of children and parents as a priority, the importance of preserving vital attachments between children and their parents is regarded as critical to the well-being of both children and parents, and vital to the prevention of IPV and other forms of family violence (Vowels et al., 2023; Fabricius, 2020; Nielsen, 2018).

At the core of debates related to the intersection of interparental conflict, family violence and fathering after separation is the question of whether post-separation shared parental responsibility is commensurate with the needs and best interests of children.

Considerable research has been undertaken comparing child and family outcomes in shared parenting versus primary caregiver arrangements (Bauserman, 2012, 2002; Nielsen, 2018; Fabricius, 2020), in addition to research on best practices in cases of protracted high conflict between parents and when family violence and IPV are issues of concern (Nielsen, 2018; Bauserman, 2012).

An in-depth examination of recent research related to the intersection of interparental conflict, family violence, and fathering after separation reveals a number of key findings that have transcended conventional wisdom in regard to the present state of knowledge in regard to the intersection of family violence and family separation (ver Steeg & Dalton, 2008; Leemis et al., 2022; Fabricius et al., 2020; Nielsen, 2018; Kruk, 2013). These



---

findings may serve as a foundation for reform of current policies and practices, and for overcoming impediments in regard to taking action toward meaningful reform. The following seven sets of findings, drawn from general family violence and IPV research, and parenting-after-separation-specific family violence research, from both an empirical and clinical perspective, are particularly relevant in pointing the way forward toward socio-legal reform.

### 1. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN INTERPARENTAL CONFLICT AND FAMILY VIOLENCE/IPV

The point of departure in examining the intersection of interparental conflict, family violence and fathering after separation, is to clearly define key terms, and in particular to differentiate between interparental conflict and family violence, including IPV. These are distinct phenomena which have been more precisely defined in the scholarly literature over the past two decades in the context of child custody disputes between parents. This furthers the interests of safety of children and parents, as these distinct phenomena call for very different approaches to the legal determination of parenting after separation. Situations of high conflict between parents, which are almost universal in the context of child custody disputes, typically do not involve IPV (Birnbaum & Bala, 2010). Although there is, at times, a fine line between “normal” family conflict and IPV, it is critical to draw that line. High conflict families manifest poor communication and poor problem-solving skills and may be highly litigious. Often, high conflict is protracted rather than short term, but it is generally responsive to therapeutic intervention (Fabricius, 2020). High conflict families may require significant resources and specialized professional intervention, including the services of family counselors, mediators, and parenting coordinators, as well as legal support. However, high conflict in itself is not a sufficient reason to limit father involvement in children’s lives. The preservation of meaningful relationships with both parents that shared parenting provides acts as an important buffer for children in high conflict situations (Fabricius, 2020; Kruk, 2013; Nielsen, 2018).

Family violence and IPV, on the other hand, are manifested in many forms, from physical and emotional abuse, to coercive control, and legal and administrative abuse. Intimate partner violence may entail a pattern of coercive and controlling behavior that may include physical, emotional, psychological, or financial abuse to establish and maintain power and control over an intimate partner, or it can be episodic or situational (van Steeg & Dalton, 2008). Family violence can also be uni- or bi-directional, involving fear, intimidation and control, and represents a more toxic situation of threats and aggression. It is also more resistant to therapeutic intervention (Johnson, 2008; Karakurt et al., 2019). Intimate partner violence and child abuse may require child protection intervention as well as criminal law proceedings, and may result in a finding that a child needs protection and/or a criminal finding (Li et al., 2020).

Differentiating between high conflict and IPV is vital because although shared parenting between mothers and fathers after separation is a protective factor for children in situations of high conflict, it is contraindicated in situations of family violence.

Whereas shared parenting and father involvement are protective for children in high conflict situations, the safety of children and abused spouses is threatened in shared care arrangements when family violence is an issue of concern. Thus, although a rebuttable legal presumption of shared parenting is optimal in cases of high conflict, a rebuttable legal presumption *against* shared parenting is needed in IPV cases (Fabricius, 2020; Kruk, 2013;



---

International Council on Shared Parenting, 2020).

Most child and family scholars and practitioners view IPV as a criminal matter; and a criminal conviction of assault against a spouse or a finding that a child needs protection from a parent should be sufficient to deny a parent equal or shared parenting. An unproven allegation of abuse, however, even in the context of a high conflict separation, is not grounds to withdraw parenting responsibilities from a parent, as the routine involvement of both parents is vital to the well-being of children (International Council on Shared Parenting, 2020; Fabricius, 2020).

**2. IN REGARD TO FAMILY VIOLENCE/IPV, THE GENDER PARADIGM HAS BEEN LARGELY REFUTED; MEN AND WOMEN ARE BOTH PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS OF IPV AT SIMILAR RATES.**

In most of the popular family violence literature, men are represented as primary perpetrators of physical abuse and women as the victims. However, research data utilizing nationally representative datasets and meta-analytic analyses indicate otherwise (Rozmann & Ariel, 2018; Hamel et al., 2012; Archer, 2000; Fiebert, 2014). Consequently, a gender-biased perspective on IPV lacks a broader scientific foundation.

Family conflict research based on self-report survey data, in contrast to gender-specific analyses, has found that IPV rates are roughly equivalent, as men and women are victims and perpetrators of IPV at roughly equal rates, and are equally likely to initiate IPV and other forms of family violence, including child abuse (Dutton, 2012; Spencer et al., 2022; Li et al., 2020). There are some differences (Roebuck et al., 2023), as women are more likely to use legal and administrative abuse in the context of child custody disputes. More women suffer injury and death from IPV, as women are more vulnerable regarding the physical impact of IPV (Rozmann & Ariel, 2018).

Gender symmetry has consistently emerged in current IPV research. This is contrary to what most people assume, largely because the study of violence against women by men has been segregated from other forms of IPV research (Dutton, 2012; Douglas & Hines, 2011). The discrepancies between findings from studies of violence against women and those of broader surveys utilizing more representative samples are striking. Almost without exception, research studies based on studies utilizing a gender paradigm explanation of domestic violence use samples drawn from battered women's shelters or treatment groups for men who batter, which are then generalized to the larger population (Dutton, 2012; McNeely et al., 2001). Research based on self-selected samples of extreme cases is highly problematic, as research conducted in women's shelters is typically vetted by feminist directives that preclude asking questions about women's role in the violence, as this is a form of "victim blaming." As Dutton (2012) noted, research utilizing such self-selected and non-representative samples create a distorted and potentially harmful perception, perpetuating the stereotype that only men are violent in the family and that only women are victims of violence. This stereotype has had a strong effect on the legal determination of parenting after separation in US and Canadian courts, as there is strong evidence of a pervasive anti-male bias in the justice system (Millar, 2009).

In addition, criminal justice statistics on which sociolegal policies are based are skewed, as women are ten times more likely to call police in alleged IPV situations and get



a response (Dutton, 2012). When police respond to cases of domestic abuse, men are treated more harshly by the law enforcement system, particularly in low-level disputes in which men are nineteen times more likely to be charged than women (Brown, 2004). The result is under-reporting of IPV among male victims, and criminal justice statistics of IPV thus reflect systemic biases in the way police handle and subsequently record domestic violence. Also, in the wide array of IPV research, erroneous generalization from non-representative samples enshrines the perception that only men are abusers and only women are victims of violence in child custody law, policy and practice (Lysova, 2022; Machado et al., 2020; Hines et al., 2015).

Partner abuse research has exposed several myths, including the myth that men's assaults have a control motive in the service of female domination, and that women's assaults are motivated mainly by self-defense. In fact, only about 5% of all IPV conforms to the gender paradigm of violent males who assault or batter non-violent females; and self-defence accounts for only about 15% of female-initiated partner abuse (Dutton, 2012). For example, about 6.5% of men and 6.3% of women have experienced partner abuse in the past year, according to the National Intimate Partner Violence Survey of the US Centers for Disease Control (Leemis et al., 2022). In Canada, the *Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces* found that 12% of women and 11% of men had experienced some form of IPV in the previous 12-month period (Roebuck et al., 2023). The largest meta-analytic studies directly challenge the gender paradigm: Fiebert (2014) concluded that men and women perpetrate and are victimized by IPV at comparable levels; Archer's (2000) meta-analytic review found that women are more likely to initiate aggression against their male partners. Since these earlier studies, several meta-analyses have found gender symmetry in IPV rates of perpetration and victimization (Rozmann & Ariel, 2018; Li et al., 2020; Spencer et al., 2021; Spencer et al., 2022; Sparrow et al., 2020).

Despite prevalent misperceptions surrounding the gender paradigm, gender symmetry in IPV levels has been found in studies since the early 1990's. Using a nationally representative sample, Stets and Strauss (1992) found that 28.6% of physically violent couples were female violent; 23% were male violent; and 48.2% were mutually abusive, a consistent finding replicated across studies (Whitaker et al., 2007). Comparing the incidence of men using severe physical violence against non-violent women with women using severe physical violence against non-violent men, Stets and Strauss' national survey data indicated that "unilateral severe violence" against non-violent partners was three times as common for female perpetrators as for male perpetrators. In a more recent meta-analysis of research on the extent and gender directionality of IPV, Rozmann and Ariel (2018) concluded although there is high variance between studies, on average there is no difference between genders regarding patterns of violence and rates of victimization.

In sum, the notion that men are the perpetrators of violence and women are the victims of IPV has given way to a gender symmetrical perspective (Spencer et al., 2021, 2022; Russell & Hamel, 2022), which needs to be at the forefront when we examine situations of IPV in the context of child custody disputes. This is the basic flaw of the gender paradigm, which dismisses IPV research that has established that partner abuse rates are comparable across sex and gender: motives vary, but women's motives are the same as men's; initiation rates are equivalent; most men's violence is not of the battering type; and children who observe IPV are more likely to become perpetrators. The result is that efforts to reduce IPV have neglected half of all victims and half of all perpetrators. More comprehensive analyses of the state of



---

knowledge on IPV (Hamel et al., 2012; Rozmann & Ariel, 2018; Russell & Hamel, 2022) have refuted the gender paradigm.

### **3. MOST IPV IS RECIPROCAL ABUSE RATHER THAN UNIDIRECTIONAL VIOLENCE, AND SITUATIONAL RATHER THAN REFLECTING A CYCLE OF COERCIVE CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR.**

In the arena of child custody, most cases of high conflict involve no violence and IPV; when spousal violence does exist, however, it usually involves bilateral violence, and situations in which the female partner is the primary or sole instigator.

Contrary to the gender paradigm which assumes a uni-directional model of male violence against women, most IPV is bi-directional. Whitaker's (2007) nationally representative sample found, in line with earlier research (Stets & Strauss, 1990), that about half of all IPV is reciprocal. In the case on *non-reciprocal* IPV situations, however, women are the initiators in over 70% of cases. Women's use of IPV against their intimate partners, therefore, is not primarily defensive; women in intimate relationships are twice as likely as men to use uni-directional violence yet is less disapproved of than male-to-female violence. Female initiation of partner violence is the leading reason for a woman becoming a victim of violence herself (Stith et al., 2004). McNeely and colleagues (2004) concluded that domestic violence is a human, not gender-specific, issue, as women are as violent as men in domestic relationships, and comment specifically on men's "legal and social defenselessness;" Archer (2000) cites the overlooked norm that men should restrain themselves from physical aggression towards women, even when women are themselves assaultive.

Although IPV can be a pattern of coercive controlling behavior that can include physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial abuse to establish and maintain power and control over an intimate partner, the majority of IPV is a one-time situational or episodic occurrence that comes about under conditions of stress, such as separation, and often exacerbated by misuse of drugs or alcohol (Johnson, 2008). Again, this is contrary to the dominant view that violence is an expression of patriarchal privilege and entitlement, of men's abuse of power over women, which ignores women's violence against men.

As Mills (2009, p. 3) stated,

*The child who I saw being hit by his mother is three times more likely to become violent in intimate relationships than a child who was not hit. The moment that he hits a woman, it is legislated that he be taken out of the context of his biography and into an automatic legal process in which he will be held absolutely accountable for any violence he committed. He will be defined as a product of patriarchy, and his masculine privilege will account for the sole source of his aggression.*

### **4. THERE ARE DIFFERENT FORMS OF IPV, ACROSS A WIDE SPECTRUM, AND DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SEVERITY OF IPV.**

There is a great deal of research on levels of IPV severity. Johnson (2008) distinguished among three levels of severity, and concluded that the most injurious and ongoing type, intimate terrorism, is relatively rare, compared to situational couple violence (the most



---

common), and violent resistance. The Canadian General Social Survey found that of all types of IPV, 2% is female initiated intimate terrorism, and 3% is male initiated intimate terrorism, a total of only 5% of IPV (Conroy, 2021).

Johnston and Campbell (1993) studied different types of IPV in the context of child custody disputes; of the five types on IPV they identified, ongoing or episodic male battering was the least common. The most common was mutually controlling interactive violence, followed by male controlling interactive violence, separation and divorce violence, and psychotic and paranoid reactions. They found that the classic cycle of violence paradigm applies to a very small percentage of IPV situations in the context of child custody disputes.

More recently, the recognition that IPV comes in many forms and covers a wide spectrum of abusive behaviors, has taken hold. This includes not only physical violence, but also psychological and emotional abuse, coercive control, sexual abuse, and legal and administrative violence, which are often overlooked. A particularly harmful form of emotional child abuse is that of children witnessing the abuse of a parent, tantamount to serious forms of physical and sexual abuse, as well as parental alienation.

### **5. PARENTAL ALIENATION IS A WIDESPREAD AND OFTEN OVERLOOKED FORM OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND IPV.**

Parental alienation disproportionately affects men and fathers, as non-resident parents, with mothers, as resident parents, more likely to abuse their power as gatekeepers of the father-child relationship (Hines et al., 2015). Parental alienation is essentially the unwarranted removal of a fit and loving parent from the life of a child, a mental condition in which a child (usually one whose parents are engaged in a high-conflict separation) allies strongly with one parent and rejects a relationship with the other parent without legitimate justification (Lorandos & Bernet, 2020). Parental alienation results in impaired functioning in behavioral, cognitive, and affective domains; and negative attributions of the target parent's intentions, hostility toward or scapegoating of the parent, and unwarranted feelings of estrangement on the part of the child (Harman et al., 2018). Parental alienation is a form of complex trauma, and a form of IPV and child abuse. It is also a systemic problem, as the adversarial system pits parents against each other in a battle to "win" custody and control of children, and creates conditions in which each parent is threatened by the potential loss of their children, leading to mutual denigration of the other parent (Kruk, 2018).

The adversarial system produces poor outcomes for both children and parents. Fully half of first-time violence occurs during separation in the context of adversarial divorce, where parents are prevented from communicating, manipulated into an adversarial battle over children, and children's need for safety and unthreatened relationships with both their parents is obscured (Fernández-Kranz & Nollenberger, 2020; Halla, 2013). In research on separated fathers affected by parental alienation, fathers were less likely to blame mothers than the adversarial system for their estrangement from their children (Kruk, 2011). Adversarial divorce is a form of collective abuse of children and their fathers, as fathers are systematically removed as primary caregivers, and more likely to be alienated from their children's lives (Millar, 2009). Parental alienation is associated with legal and administrative aggression tactics (Hines et al., 2015) used by some alienating parents to gain and maintain power over their children and the other parent (Harman et al., 2018, Harman & Matthewson, 2020).





---

The effects of parental alienation on both fathers and their children are profound. Child absence results in a pronounced reaction of grief and loss on the part of the targeted parent, leading to a situation of acute post-traumatic stress. While fathers experience a grief reaction containing all the major elements of bereavement, children lose the capacity to give and accept love from a parent (Kruk, 2018). They are manipulated to hate the targeted parent, despite their innate desire to love and be loved by both of their parents. An alienating parent's denigration results in the child's emotional rejection of the parent, and the loss of a capable and loving parent from the life of the child. The severe effects of parental alienation on children are now well-documented (Harman et al., 2018). Self-hatred is particularly disturbing among affected children and is one of the more common symptoms in situations of parental alienation. Teaching hatred of the other parent is tantamount to instilling self-hatred in the child. Children internalize the hatred targeted toward the alienated parent, are led to believe that the alienated parent did not love or want them, and experience severe guilt related to betraying the alienated parent.

Their self-hatred (and depression) is rooted in feelings of being unloved by one of their parents, and from separation from that parent, while being denied the opportunity to mourn the loss of the parent, or to even talk about the parent. Alienated children also exhibit severe psychosocial disturbances due to exposure to parental alienation. These include disrupted social-emotional development, lack of trust in relationships, social anxiety, and social isolation. They have difficulties forming and maintaining relationships and tend to discard people whenever they experience a negative reaction to them. They have a lack of tolerance for others. They have poor relationships with both of their parents. As adults, they tend to enter partnerships earlier are more likely to divorce or dissolve their cohabiting unions, and are more likely to have children outside any partnership, and are more likely to become alienated from their own children. Low self-sufficiency, lack of autonomy, and a lingering dependence on the alienating parent are characteristics of alienated children. They have a risk of becoming psychologically vulnerable or dependent. Alienated children experience difficulties controlling their impulses, and struggle with addiction and self-harm. They are more likely to smoke, drink alcohol, and abuse drugs, as well as succumb to behavioral addictions, and are more likely to be promiscuous, foregoing contraception and becoming teenage parents.

They are more likely to play truant from school and leave school at an early age. They are less likely to attain academic and professional qualifications in adulthood. They are more likely to experience unemployment, have low incomes, and remain on social assistance. They seem to aimlessly drift through life (Verhaar et al., 2022; Kruk, 2018; Baker, 2005).

The incidence of parental alienation is much higher than assumed by both the public and professional service providers, and widespread dismissal of parental alienation by professionals has been identified as a serious concern of affected parents and children alike. Harman et al. (2019) reported that 36% of US and 32% of Canadian parents report being victims of parental alienating behaviors. As with high parental conflict versus IPV situations, it is important to distinguish between moderate and severe parental alienation. Moderate parental alienation may be seen as a form of high conflict; but severe parental alienation is a much more pathological form of IPV based on coercive control; it is a type of complex trauma, as well as a form of emotional child abuse linked to physical abuse and neglect (Kruk, 2018).

Countering widespread misinformation about parental alienation, which has been



likened to the preponderance of “woozling” about IPV, remains a challenge (Nielsen, 2014). A moral panic has resulted from the claim, unsupported by scientific evidence, that mothers are losing custody of children to abusive fathers claiming to be victims of parental alienation (Center for Judicial Excellence, 2023; Meier et al., 2019). Harman et al. (2023) examined gender and child custody outcomes across 16 years of judicial decisions in which allegations of IPV and parental alienation were levied. On court file analysis of a representative sample of 500 cases in which parental alienation was determined to have occurred, Harman found that alienating mothers’ claims of abuse were not discredited more than fathers’ claims of alienation, and substantiated allegations of IPV were rare, with 90% of abuse allegations in cases of parental alienation determined to be untrue or otherwise unsubstantiated. In addition, Sharples et al. (2023) found that regardless of whether the alienating parent was a mother or a father, they were more likely to have a substantiated claim of abuse against them than the targeted parent. Denying parental alienation as a form of abuse serves to protect abusive parents, regardless of gender.

The recognition of parental alienation as a form of IPV and child abuse is vital to the well-being of parents and children (Rowlands et al., 2023; Templer et al., 2017); and the reduction and prevention of parental alienation should go hand-in-hand with the goal of reducing IPV.

## **6. BATTERER INTERVENTION PROGRAMS ARE LARGELY INEFFECTIVE, AND MOST IPV TRAINING AND INTERVENTION MODELS ARE OUTDATED.**

Gender-based intervention programs for victims and perpetrators, particularly the “power and control wheel”-based Duluth model, lack scientific foundation and have been demonstrated to be ineffective in reducing the incidence of IPV (Dutton, 2012; Karakut et al., 2019). Within a gender paradigm understanding of IPV, there is continued advocacy for a monolithic criminal justice response involving mandated interventions and an almost exclusive focus on punishment of fathers, based on the view that IPV is perpetrated exclusively by men against women. Intervention programs for IPV perpetrators based on a “punish to deter” philosophy, laws mandating arrest and imprisonment in IPV cases, “no drop” prosecution, “primary aggressor” arrest policies in cases of reciprocal violence, and lack of diversion and restorative justice approaches have resulted in an escalation rather than a decrease of family violence (Russell & Seisler, 2022).

In regard to victim services, men’s experiences of female-perpetrated IPV are largely ignored by professional service providers, policymakers, and the criminal justice system, and the paucity of support services to address the needs of male victims, who are often met with a mean-spirited cultural response when they disclose their victimization, renders them powerless to address IPV in their ongoing relationships (Roebuck et al., 2023; Machado et al., 2020; Douglas & Hines, 2011). Both external and internal barriers to seeking help for their victimization renders men highly vulnerable to ongoing and heightened abuse (Lysova et al., 2022; Machado et al., 2020). The role of false accusations of intimate partner violence against men to engage public systems in extending abuse, in situations where men themselves are victimized, is often reported (Roebuck et al., 2023). Men are thus less likely than women to seek help from formal and informal support due to the lack of available resources and the social stigma they experience, and consistently report that services for male survivors of IPV are inadequate or non-existent (Rozmann & Ariel, 2018).



---

## 7. PREVENTION IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE STRATEGY TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF IPV AND FAMILY VIOLENCE.

Given that fully half of first-time IPV occurs in the context of an adversarial approach to the determination of child custody after separation (Kruk, 2013; Fernández- Kranz & Nollenberger, 2020), a non-adversarial approach that steers parents toward collaboration, negotiation and mediation is urgently needed. A rebuttable legal presumption of shared parental responsibility is now cited as the most effective strategy to prevent both first-time IPV and other forms of family violence, including parental alienation, during and after separation (Fabricius, 2020; International Council on Shared Parenting, 2020). A warm relationship with both parents within a shared parenting arrangement is a protective factor for children in high conflict families; the benefits of a shared parenting arrangement on children's well-being exist independent of parental conflict (Fabricius, 2011).

Scholars have made a strong case for the need for shared parenting as the foundation of family law, as a protective factor for children in high conflict separations (Vowels et al., 2023; Fabricius, 2020; Nielsen, 2018; Kruk, 2013). Yet arguments for the antithetical position, that children need to be protected from harmful conflict, and will do much better with one stable parent in their lives, continue to block the passage of shared parenting law in many jurisdictions (Meier et al., 2019). This latter position has been critiqued in that it makes several problematic assumptions: that conflict is not in fact a normal part of everyday life; that conflict between parents is intractable and cannot be resolved; and that family violence increases with legal orders of shared parenting. Yet fully half of first time inter-parental violence occurs during and after the separation transition, within the context of adversarial divorce. Fernández-Kranz and Nollenberger (2020) examined the effects of shared parenting legislation on IPV in Spain, finding that the policy significantly decreased family violence, with IPV falling by almost 50%, and with a significant reduction of the number of female homicides committed by intimate partners after the reform. Moreover, these effects were largest among couples in which the mother was more likely to seek sole custody before the policy change and therefore had the largest policy effects. Halla (2013) found that shared parenting laws in the US decreased IPV by 23% in states that passed these laws between 1976 and 1984.

There is little disagreement among scholars of different theoretical orientations and advocates with opposed ideological stances on the issue of family violence and shared parenting. The position of both shared parenting advocates and women's advocates in the field of family violence are essentially the same: shared parenting advocates favor of a legal presumption of shared parenting *rebuttable in family violence situations*, which is essentially equivalent to the position of the National Association of Women and the Law of a *rebuttable legal presumption against shared parenting* in family violence situations. It is widely assumed that the views of these groups are diametrically opposed; in fact, they are two sides of the same coin (Kruk, 2020).

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The seven sets of research findings above provide a means to break through the present impasse in relation to addressing family violence and IPV in the context of parental separation. They set the stage for the recommendations below, aimed at the reduction of interparental conflict and the prevention of family violence and IPV in the context of parental separation and child custody disputes. They also provide the basis for the responsible



---

involvement of fathers continued meaningful involvement in their children's lives following separation. These recommendations for socio-legal reform, policy and practice at the intersection of family violence/IPV and shared parenting/father involvement after separation are drawn from the conclusions of the 2020 conference of the International Council on Shared Parenting (ICSP), a scientific organization devoted the study of the feasibility of shared parenting in the post-separation lives of children and families. The main focus of the conference and the recommendations below is the principle that the safety of children and parents should be the main priority and primary consideration about addressing interparental conflict, IPV, and fathering after separation.

In the arena of child custody, although most cases of high conflict over the issue of parenting involve no violence, the incidence of family violence and IPV are significantly elevated during and after separation. A high proportion of first-time family violence occurs during and after parental separation. The adversarial “winner-take-all” child custody system seems almost tailor-made to produce the worst possible outcomes, when parents become polarized when the stakes (regarding one's relationship with one's children) are high, and what started as disagreements over child caregiving arrangements are likely to become intense conflicts, with the potential to escalate into situations of violence. The threat of losing one's children in a custody contest increases the possibility of first-time violence. Thus, the ICSP concluded that in previously non-violent families, sole custody determinations and primary residence decrees are associated with increased conflict and first-time violence (Fabricius, 2020; Kruk, 2013).

The assumption that in *non-violent* high-conflict cases shared parenting is not a viable option was challenged at the ICSP conference. In fact, research has shown that shared parenting is associated with decreased parental conflict levels. A high-conflict case not involving violence has a much higher likelihood of escalating to violence when one's relationship with one's child is threatened by loss of custody. The sole custody/primary residence regime elevates the risk of IPV in these cases (International Council on Shared Parenting, 2020).

In cases where IPV does exist, it usually involves bilateral or reciprocal violence. Cases of family violence in the context of child custody disputes come in different forms, including ongoing or episodic male battering, female-initiated violence, male controlling interactive violence, separation and divorce violence, and psychotic and paranoid reactions. Mutual violence is the most common type, with male battering (the classic “cycle of violence” paradigm) constituting only one-fifth of family violence in separation and divorce cases (Johnston & Campbell, 1993). Not all acts of intimate partner violence in contested custody cases have motivations and expressions derived from a structurally derived male assumption of entitlement and need for control (Dutton, 2012).

The issue of false allegations of violence, and the issue of unreported and hidden cases of family violence, present major challenges in the determination of children's post-separation living arrangements. On the one hand false IPV allegations are often used to deprive children of contact with their parents; this is of particular concern to fathers, as spouses in high conflict divorces routinely make false or exaggerated allegations to gain a tactical advantage in the custody contest (Trocmé & Bala, 2005; Birnbaum & Bala, 2010). On the other hand, research has shown that false denials by abusers are also problematic, and that shared parenting orders can overlook the presence of family violence



---

in couple relationships (Meier, 2020; Archer-Kuhn et al., 2023).

However, most high-conflict child custody cases do not involve IPV, and relatively few contested child custody cases involve substantiated cases of child abuse, including children witnessing abuse of a parent. Less than one-quarter of all child abuse allegations in child custody cases are substantiated after investigation (Harman et al., 2023). It was concluded that if the “child in need of protection” standard were to be applied in a consistent fashion in child custody disputes involving allegations of family violence, the problem of IPV in custody cases could be addressed by means of investigations by trained professionals; without this standard the current adversarial framework of child custody determination will continue to increase the likelihood of first-time violence in separating families with no previous history of violence or abuse.

There is no debate that judicial determination of custody in cases of established family violence is needed; it is erroneous, however, to assume that high conflict cases, in which parents disagree on custodial arrangements for children after separation, commonly involve serious family violence. This places children at risk of losing one of their parents via a sole custody or primary residence order and increases the risk of family violence in the majority of contested custody cases that did not previously involve violence.

In cases of family violence where there is a finding that a child needs protection from a parent, the safety of children requires that the abusive parent has limited, supervised, or no contact with children because of potential harm to the children and the spouse. Parents with a proven history of severe violence will need different resolutions, many non-violent litigating parents in conflict over the care and custody of their children are best served, in the interests of prevention of first-time violence, by a shared parenting approach to child custody.

On the question of protracted parental conflict, there is little debate that exposure to ongoing and unresolved high conflict is harmful to children. What is under debate is the amount of parenting time that is advisable in such high conflict situations. Recent studies have found not only that shared parenting is not harmful in high conflict situations but can ameliorate the harmful effects of high conflict: a warm relationship with both parents is a protective factor for children, and the benefits of shared parenting on children’s well-being exist independent of parental conflict. Further, shared parenting is positively correlated with parental cooperation, and reduction of conflict and power imbalances. In light of the fact that parental conflict is highest during the separation transition in the context of “win-lose” adversarial proceedings, shared parenting is beneficial for children in both low and high conflict situations (Fabricius, 2020).

Comparing parental outcomes in joint versus sole custody families, shared parenting is associated with a significant reduction of parental conflict levels. There is no evidence that to support the contention that shared parenting increases parental conflict, research does not support a presumption that the amount of parenting time should be limited in cases of high conflict, and high conflict should not be used to justify restrictions on children’s contact with either of their parents (Fabricius, 2020; Nielsen, 2018; Kruk, 2013).

The conclusions of the 2020 ICSP conference were divided into recommendations for theoretical development and further research on the one hand, and law reform, policy and professional practice on the other. Primary among these was the need for a more inclusive conceptualization of family violence, beyond the gender paradigm and encompassing different



---

forms of violence, including parental alienation; and the need to recognize IPV, particularly violence against women, as a criminal offense, with corresponding reforms in the family and criminal court systems.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEORY DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

Two recommendations were made at the ICSP conference in regard to theory and research in the arena of the intersection of shared parenting and family violence, as follows:

1. The first recommendation posed the question that lies at the heart of current discussions and debates in regard to IPV as a public health crisis: Should the issue of family violence/IPV be framed as gender-specific and viewed primarily as “violence against women”, or rather conceptualized as a more gender-neutral manner such as “partner abuse”? In regard to separating and divorcing families where family violence is an issue of concern, it was concluded that an exclusive focus on fathers as perpetrators and mothers as exclusively victims of violence is unwarranted, given findings of gender symmetry in the family violence research literature. The gender paradigm in the arena of IPV further came under scrutiny at the conference in light of data that indicates that fully half of IPV is reciprocal, and that female to male violence is not, as assumed, primarily defensive. The fact that female-to-male violence has been overlooked is increasingly becoming an issue of focus in family violence research.

2. At the same time, mothers and children are affected by family violence in a different way than fathers. Violence against women results in greater injury, and gender-based family violence is a serious concern during parental separation and divorce. The impact of family violence is more pronounced for mothers; of those victims of family violence who report being injured, two-thirds are women (Spencer et al., 2021, 2022). Lockdowns during the Coronavirus pandemic left many women trapped with their abusers and exposed to greater danger. All types of violence against women, including family violence, have intensified since.

The issue of the effects of children witnessing family violence is also a serious matter: children witnessing parental abuse is now the most prevalent form of substantiated child abuse. Thirty-four per cent of cases of substantiated maltreatment of children in Canada are situations where children witness the abuse of a parent by the other parent or parent figure (Fallon et al., 2022). Child outcome studies conclude that witnessing parental abuse and family violence is one of the most serious forms of child abuse, with devastating outcomes for children’s security and well-being (Fallon et al., 2022).

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LAW REFORM, POLICY AND PRACTICE

The ICSP conference offered five recommendations in regard family law reform, policy and practice in the arena of the intersection of shared parenting and family violence, as follows:

1. Shared parenting is a viable post-separation parenting arrangement that is optimal to child development and well-being for the majority of children and families, including for children of high conflict parents. Shared parenting also prevents first-time family violence, as fully half of first-time IPV between parents occurs in the context of an adversarial battle over the care and control of children. The ICSP thus supported a rebuttable presumption of shared parenting in contested cases of child custody as the foundation of family law reform. In the



absence of a finding of IPV, sole custody and primary residence orders clearly pose serious risks to children and parents; sole custody in cases in which family violence and child abuse are not present is a flawed and dangerous policy which compromises children's safety and well-being, and has markedly increased the risk of post- separation violence in families with no previous history of violence.

2. A consensus was achieved that shared parenting is an optimal arrangement for the majority of children and families, including high conflict families, but not to situations of substantiated IPV and child abuse. The ICSP thus supported a rebuttable legal presumption against shared parenting in family violence cases. This is in accordance with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the position of the National Association of Women and the Law: In every proceeding where there is at issue a dispute as to the custody of a child, a determination by the court that domestic or family violence has occurred raises a rebuttable presumption that it is detrimental to the child and not in the best interest of the child to be placed in sole custody, joint legal custody, or joint physical custody with the perpetrator of family violence.

3. It was concluded that IPV be regarded as a criminal law matter, and that barriers to criminal prosecution of perpetrators of family violence and to protection of victims of family violence be recognized and removed. It was acknowledged that gender-based family violence is of particular concern in this regard, as women are disproportionately the victims of severe violence resulting in injury and death, and require the full protection of the criminal justice system. Criminal law at present does not protect women as it should, and using family law as a means to adjudicate whether IPV has occurred poses major risks. In addition, the ICSP called upon child protection authorities to recognize children witnessing IPV and the abuse of a parent as serious form of child abuse, and as a child protection matter which requires immediate investigation to determine whether a child is in need of protection from a parent or parents, and immediate action to ensure children's safety and well-being.

4. The ICSP conference focused on parental alienation as a common form of IPV/family violence in contested child custody cases, and concluded that it should be recognized as such by practitioners, policy makers, legal practitioners, and judicial and legislative bodies. It was recognized that shared parenting serves as a bulwark against first-time family violence and parental alienation. A major conclusion of the conference was that parental alienation is an egregious form of both family violence and child abuse.

5. In regard to the development of policies, guidelines and procedures respecting parenting and co-parenting after separation in the context of family violence, the ICSP drew attention to needed reforms in professional practice in the legal and mental health fields in four key areas:

*(1) Family Violence and the Education and Training of Mental Health and Legal Family Practitioners, and Child and Family Legislators and Policymakers*

Establishing standards for the education and skills training of mental health and legal practitioners in the field of shared parenting, and the education of child and family legislators and policymakers, are urgently needed, in the following areas: trauma, IPV and parental alienation in intimate relationships and its consequences for shared parenting; procedures, instruments and skills to screen for IPV and assess safety risks; specialized skills and interventions to ensure safety and provide specialized processes in IPV cases; and alternatives to shared parenting when violence is a factor.



---

(2) *Screening for IPV/Family Violence*

Separating parents must be able to negotiate safely, voluntarily and competently in order to reach a fair agreement. Because abuse can significantly diminish a person's ability to negotiate safely and effectively, family professionals should never proceed without first screening for abuse. The presumption against shared parenting in cases of IPV/family violence suggests that few families in which violence is or has been present are suitable for a shared parenting arrangement. Family members should be interviewed separately and in a safe environment to assess: the risks or threats of family violence; the safety needs of children; each family member's ability to negotiate voluntarily and competently, and represent their needs and interests; the extent of power imbalances and their impact on shared parenting arrangements; and the need for safe and appropriate alternatives to shared parenting.

As aids to assessment, screening instruments ought to be carefully designed and should not replace high levels of investigative interviewing and assessment for those cases in which IPV/family violence is an issue of concern.

(3) *Safety and Cases of Historical Family Violence Where Specialized Interventions May Enable Shared Parenting*

Minimizing risk and maximizing safety ought to direct the development of protocols, interdisciplinary collaboration and research on the effectiveness of shared parenting where past IPV/family violence is no longer an issue of concern and support services for abused persons and their children are available. Provisions for safety should be in place prior to considering shared parenting as an option in these situations. These provisions should include policies to warn and protect endangered parties and requirements to report threats of harm. Screening for abuse and maintaining safety provisions are ongoing obligations throughout the entire process. Specialized intervention in cases of historical family violence require safety considerations for victims as well as the development and use of specific skills and interventions to: ensure safety before, during and following shared parenting negotiation; compensate for power imbalances; and terminate shared parenting negotiation safely and effectively.

(4) *Alternatives to Shared Parenting in Cases of IPV/Family Violence*

The following principles should guide professional practice in regard to the obligation to ensure safe alternatives to shared parenting in cases of family violence: safety is the first priority; and every community should offer an array of marital dissolution models that include legal negotiation, adjudication, mediation, negotiation, and facilitated settlement conferences. Jurisdictions should provide education about the benefits and risks of available alternatives and dedicate the resources necessary to assure safe and timely access by victims of violence to marital dissolution alternatives. Funding for the participation of community-based advocates in marital dissolution systems should also be made available. Victims of violence should not be compelled into shared parenting arrangements unless legal representation is authorized and economically accessible. The need to protect and nurture children living in the context of family violence/IPV should be addressed specifically in contested custody cases.





---

## CONCLUSION

The reduction of interparental conflict and the prevention of family violence/IPV on the one hand, and continuing the responsible involvement of fathers in their children's lives in the context of parental separation and child custody disputes on the other, should be our primary goals when addressing issues related to the intersection of interparental conflict, family violence, IPV, and fathering after separation. To address these aims, we need to rethink the limitations of our current strategies and to reformulate our current theories of family violence and IPV.

Given the reality that IPV has reached epidemic proportions, and represents a global public health crisis, it behooves us to recognize that our present efforts have yielded little in the way of moving in the direction of reducing and eliminating IPV, and we need to stop redoubling these failed attempts, and seek new evidence-based solutions, theoretical frameworks for understanding IPV, and paradigm shifts in intervention programs with children and families, particularly during high stress and high risk periods such as parental separation. Traditional punitive and adversarial means have clearly exacerbated the crisis, and radical reformulations are necessary.

This article has explored seven sets of pertinent research findings which provide a foundation for socio-legal, policy and practice reform. It has discussed new directions for breaking the present impasse in regard to policy and practice at the intersection of interparental conflict, family violence, IPV and fathering after separation, in the form of seven recommendations for theoretical, policy and practice reform. These findings and recommendations, however, will be challenged within the present polarized climate surrounding family violence and IPV, parental alienation, and shared parental responsibility after parental separation and divorce. Efforts by well-meaning organizations have tried but failed to bring together scientists, policymakers, practitioners and advocates who cling to self-serving ideologies and false binaries, ignore research evidence that does not conform to their world views, and refuse to recognize points of common interest and convergence which provide a basis for the resolution of points of divergence and difference. It is this lack of dialogue which more than any other factor has resulted in our present impasse and inability to make inroads into addressing the public health crisis of IPV. The key to reducing family violence is to address the issue of family violence openly and directly, and that continues to elude us, at the expense of the children and families most directly affected by our inaction.

Given the plethora of new research over the past quarter century in regard to family violence and IPV, parental alienation, shared parenting, and the changing roles of fathers and mothers, there is considerable urgency in regard to examining the implications of this research with respect to legislative, policy and professional practice reforms. The need for a paradigm shift in regard to understanding family violence and IPV in their many forms as bi-directional phenomena affecting both women and men, mothers and fathers, and in regard taking action to address IPV as a public health emergency with intervention programs aimed at reducing and eliminating IPV in all its manifestations, is urgent. It behooves us to go beyond the gender paradigm in regard to understanding the full range of family violence and IPV (including parental alienation) in the context of parental separation. There needs to be a vital distinction made between high conflict cases where there have been relatively minor, isolated non-violent acts, and IPV where there has been a pattern of abuse that has traumatized parents and their children. And given that it is responsibility of social institutions



---

to support parents in the fulfilment of their parenting responsibilities to their children's needs, when such support is not forthcoming, representatives of social institutions should be held to account.

## REFERENCES

- Archer, J. (2000). Sex Differences in Aggression Acts Between Heterosexual Partners: A Meta-analytic Review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 126 (5): 651–680.
- Archer-Kuhn, B., Saini, M., Hughes, J., Tam, D., & Trudgill, D. I. (2023). A survey of mothers' experiences of shared parenting and domestic violence. *Family Court Review*, 61(2), 395-412.
- Baker, A. J. L. (2005). The long-term effects of parental alienation on adult children: A qualitative research study, *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 33:4, 289-302.
- Bauserman, R. (2002). Child adjustment in joint-custody versus sole-custody arrangements: a meta-analytic review. *Journal of Family psychology*, 16(1), 91.
- Bauserman, R. (2012). A meta-analysis of parental satisfaction, adjustment, and conflict in joint custody and sole custody following divorce. *Journal of divorce & remarriage*, 53(6), 464-488.
- Birnbaum, R. & Bala, N. (2010). Differentiating high conflict cases. *Family Court Review* 48, 403-416.
- Brown, G. A. 2004. Gender As a Factor in the Response of the Law-enforcement System to Violence Against Partners. *Sexuality and Culture* 8 (3/4): 3-139.
- Center for Judicial Excellence (2023). *Child safety first: preventing child homicides during divorce, separation, and child custody disputes*. (6th ed. Vol. 1, pp. 793- 828). Center for Judicial Excellence.
- Conroy, S. (2021). *Family Violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2019*. Statistics Canada. Catalogue no. 85-002-X ISSN 1209- 6393.
- Douglas, E. M., & Hines, D. A. (2011). The help-seeking experiences of men who sustain intimate partner violence: An overlooked population and implications for practice. *Journal of Family Violence*, 26(6), 473-485.
- Dutton, D. G. (2012). The case against the role of gender in intimate partner violence. *Aggression & Violent Behavior*, 17(1), 99-104.
- Fabricius, W. (2020). Equal parenting time: The case for a legal presumption. *The Oxford Handbook of Children and the Law* (pp. 453-476). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.



---

Fabricius, W. V., Sokol, K. R., Diaz, P., & Braver, S. L. (2012). Parenting time, parent conflict, parent-child relationships, and children's physical health. *Parenting plan evaluations: Applied research for the family court*, 188-213.

Fiebert, M. (2014). References examining assaults by women on their spouses or male partners: An updated annotated bibliography, *Sexuality and Culture*, 18, 405-467.

Fallon, B., Joh-Carnella, N., Trocmé, N., Esposito, T., Hélie, S., & Lefebvre, R. (2022).

Major findings from the Canadian incidence study of reported child abuse and neglect 2019. *International Journal on Child Maltreatment: Research, Policy and Practice*, 5(1), 1-17.

Fernández-Kranz, D. & Nollenberger, N. (2020). Bargaining under Threats: The Effect of Joint Custody Laws on Intimate Partner Violence. *IZA Institute of Labor Economics*.

Gill, C. (2006). Violence Against Women and Children: Partnering for Change. *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice*, 30(3), 2-3.

Halla, M. (2013). The Effect of Joint Custody on Family Outcomes, *Journal of the European Economic Association* 11, 2.

Hamel, J., Langhinrichsen-Rohling, J., & Hines, D. A. (2012). More than a literature review: The partner abuse state of knowledge articles and online database. *Partner Abuse*, 3(2), 131-139.

Harman, J. J., Kruk, E., & Hines, D. A. (2018). Parental alienating behaviors: An unacknowledged form of family violence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 144(12), 1275-1299.

Harman, J. J., Leder-Elder, S., & Biringen, Z. (2019). Prevalence of adults who are the targets of parental alienating behaviors and their impact: Results from three national polls. *Child & Youth Services Review*, 106, 1-13.

Harman, J. J., & Matthewson, M. (2020). Parental alienating behaviors. In D. Lorandos and W. Bernet (Eds.), *Parental Alienation- Science and Law*,

pp. 82-141. Charles C Thomas Publisher.

Harman, J. J., & Lorandos, D. (2021). Allegations of family violence in court: How parental alienation affects judicial outcomes. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 27(2), 184-208.

Harman, J. J., Warshak, R. A., Lorandos, D., & Florian, M. J. (2022). Developmental psychology and the scientific status of parental alienation. *Developmental Psychology*, 58(10), 1887-1911.

Harman, J. J., Giancarlo, C., Lorandos, D., & Ludmer, B. (2023). Gender and child custody cases across 16 years of judicial decisions regarding abuse and parental alienation. *Children and Youth Services Review* 155, 1-13.



---

Hines, D. A., Douglas, E. M., & Berger, J. L. (2015). A self-report measure of legal and administrative aggression within intimate relationships. *Aggressive Behavior*, 41(4), 295-309.

International Council on Shared Parenting. (2020). Conclusions of the Fifth International Conference on Shared Parenting, Vancouver. <https://www.twohomes.org/conclusions-for-vancouver-conference/>

Jaffe, P. G., Johnston, J. R., Crooks, C. V., & Bala, N. (2008). Custody disputes involving allegations of domestic violence: Toward a differentiated approach to parenting plans. *Family Court Review*, 46(3), 500-522.

Johnson, M. P. (2008). *A typology of domestic violence: Intimate terrorism, violent resistance and situational couple violence*. Lebanon, NH: Northeastern University Press.

Johnston, J. R., & Campbell, L. E. (1993). A clinical typology of interparental violence in disputed-custody divorces. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 63(2), 190-199.

Karakurt, G., Koç, E., Çetinsaya, E. E., Ayluçtarhan, Z., & Bolen, S. (2019). Meta-analysis and systematic review for the treatment of perpetrators of intimate partner violence. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 105, 220-230.

Kruk, E. (2020). Rebuttable legal presumption of shared parenting versus rebuttable legal presumption against shared parenting in family violence situations: Contradictory or complimentary? Presentation to the Fifth International Conference on Shared Parenting, Vancouver, December 6.

Kruk, E. (2018). Parental alienation as a form of emotional child abuse: Current state of knowledge and future directions for research. *Family Science Review*, 22 (4), 141-164.

Kruk, E. (2013). *The equal parent presumption*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Kruk, E. (2011). *Divorced Fathers: Children's Needs and Parental Responsibilities*.

Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Leemis, R. W., Friar, N., Khatiwada, S., Chen, M. S., Kresnow, M. J., Smith, S. G. & Basile, K. C. (2022). *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2016/2017. Report on Intimate Partner Violence*.

Li, S., Zhao, F., & Yu, G. (2020). A meta-analysis of childhood maltreatment and intimate partner violence perpetration. *Aggression and violent behavior*, 50, 101362.

Lorandos, D., & Bernet, W. (2020). *Parental Alienation: Science & Law*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas.



---

Lysova, A., Hanson, K., Dixon, L., Douglas, E. M., Hines, D. A., & Celi, E. M. (2022).

Internal and external barriers to help seeking: Voices of men who experienced abuse in the intimate relationships. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 66(5), 538–559.

Machado, A., Hines, D., & Douglas, E. M. (2020). Male victims of female-perpetrated partner violence: A qualitative analysis of men's experiences, the impact of violence, and perceptions of their worth. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, 21, 612–621.

McNeely, R. L., P. W. Cook, and J. B. Torres. (2001). Is Domestic Violence a Gender Issue or a Human Issue? *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 4 (4), 227–251.

Meier, J. S. (2020). U. S. child custody outcomes in cases involving parental alienation and abuse allegations: What do the data show? *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 42(1), 92–105.

Meier, J. S., Dickson, S., O'Sullivan, C., Rosen, L., & Hayes, J. (2019). Child custody outcomes in cases involving parental alienation and abuse allegations (GWU Law School Public Law Research Paper No. 2019–56).

Millar, P. (2009). *The best interests of children: An evidence-based approach*. University of Toronto Press.

Mills, L. G. (2009). *Insult to injury: Rethinking our responses to intimate abuse*. Princeton University Press.

Nielsen, L. (2018). Joint Versus Sole Physical Custody: Children's Outcomes Independent of Parent–Child Relationships, Income, and Conflict in 60 Studies. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 59 (4), 247–281.

Nielsen, L. (2014). Wozzles: Their role in custody law reform, parenting plans, and family court.

*Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 20(2), 164–180.

Roebuck, B. S., McGlinchey, D., Lysova, A. V., Hastie, K., & Taylor, M. (2023). Similar But Different: Intimate Partner Violence Experienced by Women and Men. *Journal of Family Violence* 38, 1–12.

Rowlands, G. A., Warshak, R. A., & Harman, J. J. (2023). Abused and rejected: The link between domestic intimate partner violence and parental alienation. *Partner Abuse*, 14(1), 37–58.

Rozmann, N., & Ariel, B. (2018). The extent and gender directionality of intimate partner violence in different relationship types: A systematic review and meta-analysis.

*Partner Abuse*, 9(4), 335–361.



---

Russell, B. & Hamel, J. (2022). *Gender and Domestic Violence: Contemporary Legal Practice and Intervention Reforms*, Oxford University Press.

Russell, B., & Seisler, E. (2022). The Law Enforcement Response. In Russell, B. & Hamel, J., *Gender and Domestic Violence: Contemporary Legal Practice and Intervention Reforms*, Oxford University Press, 57-81.

Saini, M. A., Deutsch, R. M., & Drozd, L. M. (2023). Defining points and transformative turns in family violence, parenting and coparenting disputes. *Family Court Review*.

Sharples, A.E., Harman, J.J. & Lorandos, D. (2023) Findings of abuse in families affected by parental alienation. *Journal of Family Violence*.

Sparrow, K., Dickson, H., Kwan, J., Howard, L., Fear, N., & MacManus, D. (2020). Prevalence of self-reported intimate partner violence victimization among military personnel: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Trauma, violence, & abuse*, 21(3), 586-609.

Spencer, C. M., Keilholtz, B. M., & Stith, S. M. (2021). The association between attachment styles and physical intimate partner violence perpetration and victimization: A meta-analysis. *Family process*, 60(1), 270-284.

Spencer, C. M., Stith, S. M., & Cafferky, B. (2022). What puts individuals at risk for physical intimate partner violence perpetration? A meta-analysis examining risk markers for men and women. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 23(1), 36-51.

Stets, J. E. & M. A. Straus. (1990). "Gender Differences in Reporting Marital Violence and Its Medical and Psychological Consequences." In *Physical Violence in American Families: Risk Factors and Adaptations to Violence in 8,145 Families*, edited by M. A. Straus & R. J. Gelles, 151-166.

Stith, S. M., K. H. Rosen, E. E. McCollum, & C. J. Thomsen (2004). Treating Intimate Partner Violence within Intact Couple Relationships: Outcomes of Multi-couple Versus Individual Couple Therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 30, 305-318.

Templer, K., Matthewson, M., Haines, J., & Cox, G. (2017), Recommendations for best practice in response to parental alienation: findings from a systematic review. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 39(1), 103-122.

Troc me, N., & Bala, N. (2005). False allegations of abuse and neglect when parents separate. *Child abuse & neglect*, 29(12), 1333-1345.

Verhaar, S., Matthewson, M. L., Bentley, C. (2022). The impact of parental alienating behaviours on the mental health of adults alienated in childhood. *Children* 9(4), 475.

ver Steeg, N. Dalton. C. (2008) Report from the Wingspread Conference on domestic violence and family courts. *Family Court Review*, 46, 453-475.



Vowels, L. M., Comolli, C. L., Bernardi, L., Chacón-Mendoza, D., & Darwiche, J. (2023). Systematic review and theoretical comparison of children's outcomes in post-separation living arrangements. *Plos one*, 18(6).

Warshak, R. A. (2014). Social science and parenting plans for young children: A consensus report. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 20(1), 46.

Whitaker, D. J., T. Haileyesus, M. Swahn, & L. Saltzman. (2007). Differences in Frequency of Violence and Reported injury Between Relationships with Reciprocal and Nonreciprocal Intimate Partner Violence. *American Journal of Public Health* 97 (5): 941-947.

---

---

## AUTHOR PROFILE



**Dr. Edward Andrew Kruk** is Associate Professor Emeritus at the University of British Columbia (UBC), specializing in child and family policy and practice, who also practices as a family mediator in Vancouver, Canada. He is the author of five books and numerous research articles on the subjects of shared parenting responsibility, family violence, parental alienation, family mediation, and fathering after separation. In addition to thirty years on faculty at UBC, he has worked as a professor at the University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work, as family therapist with Catholic Family Services in Calgary, medical social worker with the Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh, school social worker with the Metro Separate School Board in Toronto, and child protection worker with the Metro and Catholic Children's Aid Societies in Toronto. He is an active member of several local and international NGO's, including serving as current President of the International Council on Shared Parenting. He is the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Award for his service to children and families, and is the father of two boys, Stephan and Liam.

**Contact details:** [Edward.kruk@ubc.ca](mailto:Edward.kruk@ubc.ca)

---



NEW MALE STUDIES: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL (NMS) IS AN OPEN ACCESS ONLINE INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION OF ISSUES FACING BOYS AND MEN WORLDWIDE.

THIS JOURNAL USES OPEN JOURNAL SYSTEMS 2.3.4.0, WHICH IS OPEN SOURCE JOURNAL MANAGEMENT AND PUBLISHING SOFTWARE DEVELOPED, SUPPORTED, AND FREELY DISTRIBUTED BY THE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE PROJECT UNDER THE GNU GENERAL PUBLIC LICENCE.

THIS ARTICLE HAS BEEN DOWNLOADED FROM [HTTP://NEWMALESTUDIES.COM](http://newmalestudies.com)