

Diagnosis

The Patterns of Pathology

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Patterns of Pathology – Patterns of Problems

- Diagnosis is a pattern-match of the symptoms to the diagnostic criteria.
- Each pathology has its patterns.
- Trauma is a pathology of replicating patterns from the trauma.

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Names for the Patterns

- Schemas: Aaron Beck
- Internal Working Models: John Bowlby
- Transference: Sigmund Freud

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Schemas - Beck

From Beck et al: "Evaluation of the particular demands of a situation precedes and triggers an adaptive (or maladaptive) strategy. How a situation is evaluated depends in part, at least, on the relevant underlying beliefs. These beliefs are embedded in more or less stable structures, labeled "**schemas**," that select and synthesize incoming data."

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Internal Working Models - Bowlby

From Bowlby: "No variables, it is held, have more far-reaching effects on personality development than have a child's experiences within his family: for, starting during the first months of his relations with his mother figure, and extending through the years of childhood and adolescence in his relations with both parents, he builds up **working models** of how attachment figures are likely to behave towards him in any of a variety of situations; and on those models are based all his expectations, and therefore all his plans for the rest of his life."

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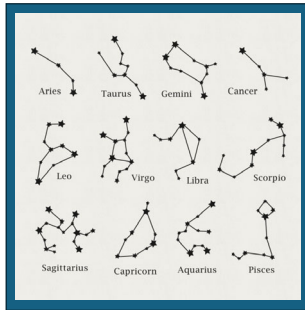
Definitions

Diagnosis guides treatment

- We must first *diagnose* what the *pathology* is before we know how to *treat it*.
- We must first *identify* what the *problem* is before we know how to *fix it*.
 - Diagnosis = identify
 - Pathology = problem
 - Treatment = fix it

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Key stars identify the constellation:



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But a constellation is a picture of something:



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Diagnostic Criteria & Pathology Patterns

- Diagnostic indicators – criteria – are single symptoms needed to identify which pattern.
 - The pathology is the entire picture from the pattern.
- Ex: the three Diagnostic Indicators of pathogenic parenting (Childress, 2015) are the three single-stars to identify the constellation (pathology).
- The 12 Associated Clinical Signs (ACS) are the surrounding stars that make the entire pattern.

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Patterns of Pathology:

- **Trauma:** Trans-generational transmission
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Trauma Pattern

Trauma Reenactment Narrative

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Trauma Pattern:

Abusive Parent – Victimized Child – Protective Parent

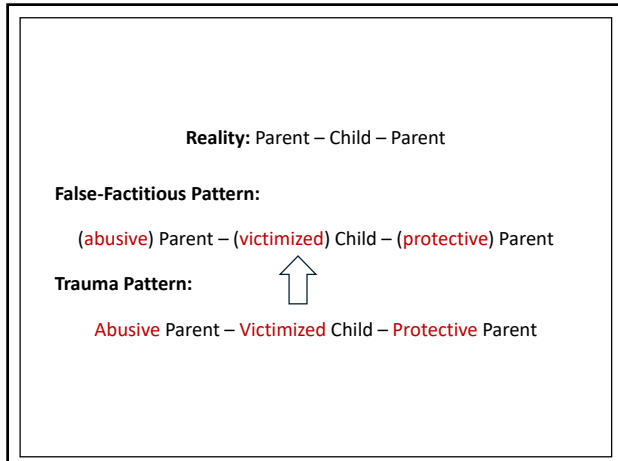
Factitious Pattern:

Parent – Child – Parent



(abusive) Parent – (victimized) Child – (protective) Parent

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From van der Kolk: “Victims of trauma respond to contemporary stimuli as if the trauma had returned, without conscious awareness that past injury rather than current stress is the basis of their physiologic emergency responses. The hyperarousal interferes with their ability to make calm and rational assessments and prevents resolution and integration of the trauma.”

van der Kolk, B.A. (1989). **The compulsion to repeat the trauma:** Re-enactment, revictimization, and masochism. *Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 12, 389-411.

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From van der Kolk: “When the trauma fails to be integrated into the totality of a person’s life experiences, the victim remains fixated on the trauma. Despite avoidance of emotional involvement, traumatic memories cannot be avoided: even when pushed out of waking consciousness, they come back in the form of **reenactments**, nightmares, or feelings related to the trauma... Recurrences may continue throughout life during periods of stress.” (p. 5)

van der Kolk, B.A. (1987). The psychological consequences of overwhelming life experiences. In B.A. van der Kolk (Ed.) *Psychological Trauma* (1-30). Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, Inc.

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Pearlman, C.A., Courtois, C.A. (2005). **Clinical Applications of the Attachment Framework: Relational Treatment of Complex Trauma.** *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 18, 449-459.

From Pearlman & Courtois: “**Reenactments** of the traumatic past are common in the treatment of this population and frequently represent either explicit or coded repetitions of the unprocessed trauma in an attempt at mastery. **Reenactments** can be expressed psychologically, relationally, and somatically and may occur with conscious intent or with little awareness.”

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Pearlman, C.A., Courtois, C.A. (2005). **Clinical Applications of the Attachment Framework: Relational Treatment of Complex Trauma.** *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 18, 449-459.

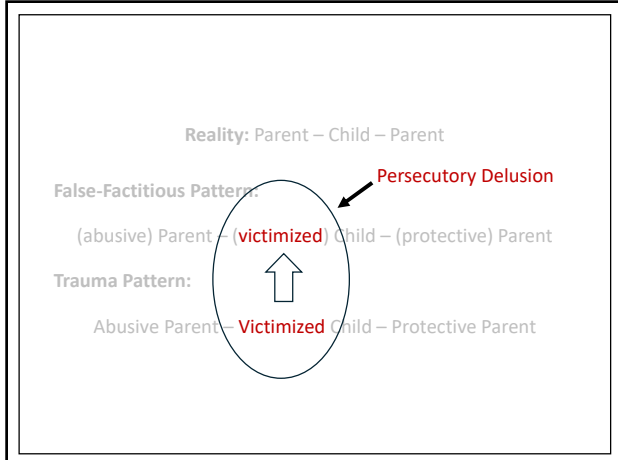
From Pearlman & Courtois: “One primary transference-countertransference dynamic involves **reenactment** of familiar roles of **victim-perpetrator-rescuer**-bystander in the therapy relationship. Therapist and client play out these roles, often in complementary fashion with one another, as they **relive various aspects** of the client’s early attachment relationships.”

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Diagnostic Pattern

Induced Persecutory Delusion

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Diagnostic Criteria & Pathology Patterns

From the APA: “Persecutory Type: delusions that the person, or someone to whom the person is close) is being malevolently treated in some way.”

Google malevolent: having or showing a wish to do evil

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Walters, M. G., & Friedlander, S. (2016). When a child rejects a parent: Working with the intractable resist/refuse dynamic. *Family Court Review*, 54(3), 424–445

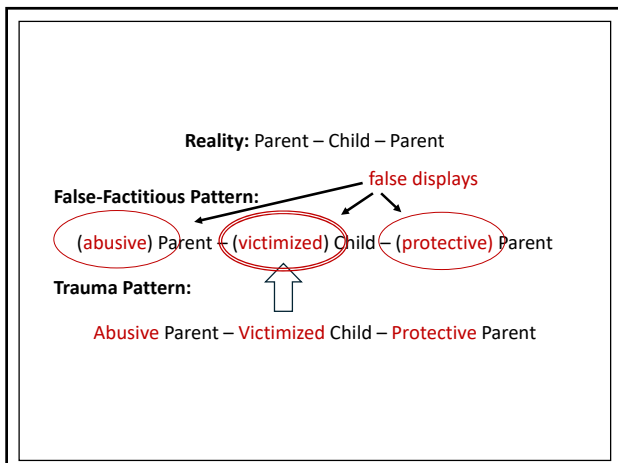
From Walters & Friedlander: “In some RRD families [resist-refuse dynamic], a parent’s underlying encapsulated **delusion** about the other parent is at the root of the intractability (cf. Johnston & Campbell, 1988, p. 53ff; Childress, 2013). An encapsulated **delusion** is a fixed, circumscribed belief that persists over time and is not altered by evidence of the inaccuracy of the belief.” (Walters & Friedlander, 2016, p. 426)

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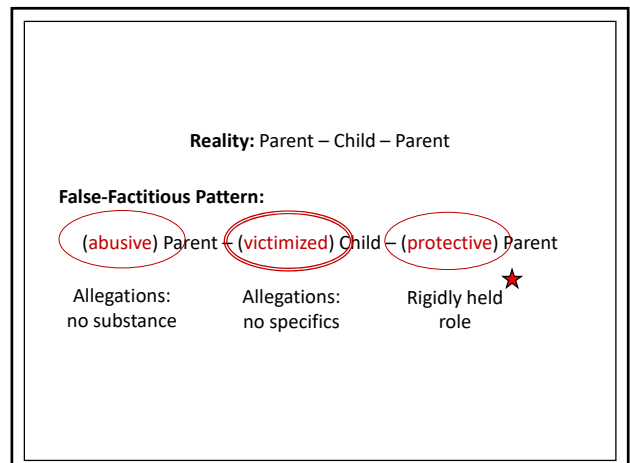
Walters, M. G., & Friedlander, S. (2016). When a child rejects a parent: Working with the intractable resist/refuse dynamic. *Family Court Review*, 54(3), 424–445

From Walters & Friedlander: “When alienation is the predominant factor in the RRD [resist-refuse dynamic], the theme of the favored parent’s fixed **delusion** often is that the rejected parent is sexually, physically, and/or emotionally abusing the child. The child may come to share the parent’s encapsulated **delusion** and to regard the beliefs as his/her own (cf. Childress, 2013).” (Walters & Friedlander, 2016, p. 426).

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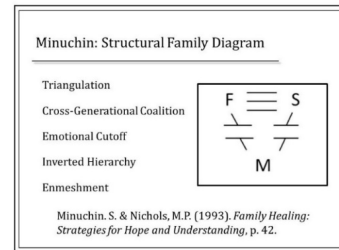
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Family Systems Pattern

Cross-Generational Coalition

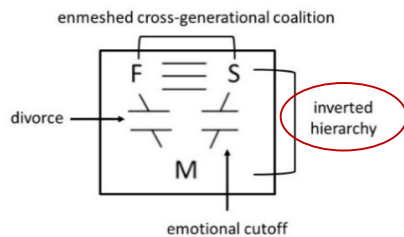
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The child is being **triangulated** into the spousal conflict through the formation of an enmeshed **cross generational coalition** with the allied parent against the targeted parent, resulting in an **emotional cut** off in the child's attachment bond to the targeted parent.



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Minuchin: Structural Family Diagram



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From Madanes: "Cross-generational coalitions take different forms in different families (Madales, 2009)... These alliances are most often **covert** and are rarely expressed verbally. They involve painful conflicts that can continue for years. Sometimes cross-generational coalitions are overt. A wife might confide her marital problems to her child and in this way antagonize the child against the father... The child may feel conflicted as a result, suffering because his or her loyalties are divided." (Madales, 2018)

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Stone, Buehler, and Barber: "The concept of **triangles** "describes the way any three people relate to each other and involve others in emotional issues between them" (Bowen, 1989, p. 306). In the anxiety-filled environment of conflict, a third person is **triangulated**, either temporarily or permanently, to ease the anxious feelings of the conflicting partners. By default, that third person is exposed to an anxiety-provoking and disturbing atmosphere. For example, a child might become the scapegoat or **focus of attention**, thereby transferring the tension from the marital dyad to the parent-child dyad."

Stone, G., Buehler, C., & Barber, B. K. (2002) Interparental conflict, parental psychological control, and youth problem behaviors. In B. K. Barber (Ed.), *Intrusive parenting: How psychological control affects children and adolescents*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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Stone, Buehler, and Barber: "Unresolved tension in the marital relationship might spill over to the parent-child relationship through parents' use of **psychological control** as a way of securing and maintaining a strong emotional alliance and level of support from the child. As a consequence, the **triangulated** youth might feel pressured or obliged to listen to or agree with one parents' complaints against the other. The resulting **enmeshment** and **cross-generational coalition** would exemplify parents' use of **psychological control** to coerce and maintain a parent-youth emotional alliance against the other parent (Haley, 1976; Minuchin, 1974)."

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Personality Disorder Patterns

Narcissistic – Borderline - Dark

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Dark Personalities & Delusions

Greenham & Childress (ResearchGate):

- Dark Personalities and Induced Delusional Disorder, Part I: Solving the Gordian Knot of Conflict in the Family and Domestic Violence Courts

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/369741224_Dark_Personalities_and_Induced_Delusional_Disorder_Part_I_Solving_the_Gordian_Knot_of_Conflict_in_the_Family_and_Domestic_Violence_Courts

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From Millon: “Under conditions of unrelieved adversity and failure, narcissists may decompensate into **paranoid** disorders. Owing to their excessive use of fantasy mechanisms, they are disposed to misinterpret events and to construct **delusional** beliefs... Among narcissists, delusions often take form after a serious challenge or setback has upset their image of superiority and omnipotence... **Delusional** systems may also develop as a result of having felt betrayed and humiliated. Here we may see the rapid unfolding of persecutory **delusions** and an arrogant grandiosity characterized by verbal attacks and bombast.” (Millon, 2011, pp. 407-408).

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From Barnow et al: “In conclusion, we therefore suggest that it is not a cognitive developmental deficit but rather a tendency to construe interpersonal relations as **malevolent** that characterizes BPD, and this may be shared with certain **psychotic disorders**.” (Barnow et al, 2010, p. 187)

Barnow, S., Arens, E. A., Sieswerda, S., Dinu-Biringer, R., Spitzer, C., Lang, S., et al (2010). **Borderline personality disorder and psychosis: a review.** *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 12,186-195

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Dark Triad

From Giammarco & Vernon: “First cited by Paulhus and Williams (2002), the Dark Triad refers to a set of three distinct but related antisocial personality traits: **Machiavellianism**, **narcissism**, and **psychopathy**. Each of the Dark Triad traits is associated with feelings of superiority and privilege. This, coupled with a lack of remorse and empathy, often leads individuals high in these socially malevolent traits to exploit others for their own personal gain.”

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Dark Personalities

Dark Triad:

- Narcissistic – Psychopathic – ↑ Manipulation

Vulnerable Dark Triad:

- Vulnerable Narcissism – Borderline – ↑ Manipulation

Dark Tetrad

- Add Sadism to the Dark Triad

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Virtuous Victim Signaling

From Ok, et al: “Effective altruism requires the ability to differentiate between false and true victims. Credulous acceptance of all virtuous victim signals as genuine can also enable and reward fraudulent claims, particularly by those with **antisocial personality traits**... The findings of this study support our hypothesis that **virtuous victim signaling** is more frequently displayed by **Dark Triad** personalities.”

Ok, E., Qian, Y., Strojcek, B., & Aquino, K. (2021). Signaling virtuous victimhood as indicators of **Dark Triad** personalities. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 120(6), 1634–1661.

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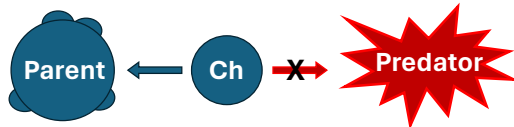
Attachment Patterns

A Goal-Corrected Motivational System

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Goal-Corrected Motivational System

The attachment system is a “goal-corrected” motivational system – it ALWAYS seeks to bond to a parent, even bad parents, especially bad parents.



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Breach & Repair

From Tronick & Gold: “Repair is where the action is. We came to recognize that repair is the **crux** of human interactions. Repair leads to a feeling of pleasure, trust and security, the implicit knowledge that *I can overcome problems*. Furthermore, repair teaches a critical life lesson: the negative feelings that arise from a mismatch can be changed into a positive feeling when two people subsequently achieve a match. One does not have to get stuck in a negative feeling state.” (Tronick & Gold, 2020, p. 38)

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The pathology in the family courts is a false (factitious) attachment pathology imposed on the child for secondary gain to the allied pathological parent.

FDIA: Factitious Disorder Imposed on Another

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Diagnostic Criteria & Patterns

The Criteria are not the Pattern

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The puzzle 'Cats in a Garden' will always have three pieces.

If these three pieces are present, the puzzle (diagnosis) is Cats in a Garden.



But the puzzle is not Cats in a Garden because of three pieces, it's Cats in a Garden because the PICTURE shows cats in a garden – there are flowers, a watering can, birds, a wheelbarrow, and five cats that all make the picture.

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Diagnostic criteria are the few spots that quickly tell Cats in a Garden from Horses in a Meadow.

But diagnosis involves seeing the entire picture of five cats playing in the garden. Over here there will be birds, over here there will be a basket of flowers. There will be butterflies and a watering can.

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Diagnostic Checklist for Pathogenic Parenting

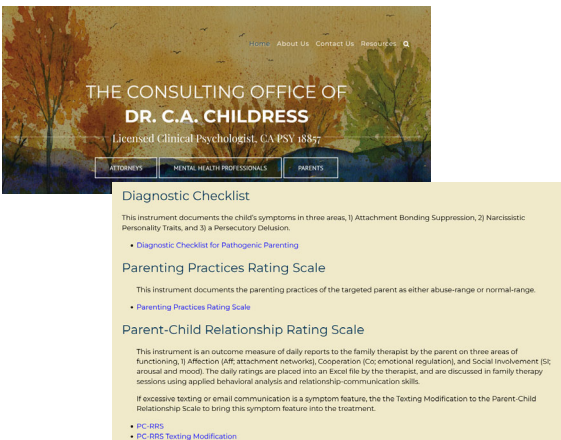
Three Diagnostic Indicators (3 DI)

1. Attachment suppression toward a normal-range parent
2. Five narcissistic traits (or a phobic fear of the parent) displayed by the child
3. A persecutory delusion displayed by the child

12 Associated Clinical Signs (12 ACS)

- Frequently but not always present

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ATTORNEYS MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS PARENTS

Diagnostic Checklist

This instrument documents the child's symptoms in three areas, 1) Attachment Bonding Suppression, 2) Narcissistic Personality Traits, and 3) a Persecutory Delusion.

- [Diagnostic Checklist for Pathogenic Parenting](#)

Parenting Practices Rating Scale

This instrument documents the parenting practices of the targeted parent as either abuse-range or normal-range.

- [Parenting Practices Rating Scale](#)

Parent-Child Relationship Rating Scale

This instrument is an outcome measure of daily reports to the family therapist by the parent on three areas of functioning, 1) Affection (Aff; attachment networks), Cooperation (Co; emotional regulation), and Social Involvement (Si; arousal and mood). The daily ratings are placed into an Excel file by the therapist, and are discussed in family therapy sessions using applied behavioral analysis and relationship-communication skills.

If excessive texting or email communication is a symptom feature, the Texting Modification to the Parent-Child Relationship Scale to bring this symptom feature into the treatment.

- [PC-RRS](#)
- [PC-RRS Texting Modification](#)

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