



Resist and Refuse: Understanding and Overcoming Parental Alienation

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Glossary of Terms

What is Resist-Refuse?

- Affinity
- Alignment
- Loyalty Conflict
- *Justified Rejection*
- Alienation
- HYBRID

The Early Hallmarks of a Toxic Family System

What are some of the warning signs?

How does conflict escalation contribute?

How do professionals assess this dynamic?

Treatment and Interventions

Appropriate treatment depends on whether it is a **MILD, MODERATE, or SEVERE** case of Resist-Refuse.

Mild vs. Moderate Cases

Parent education and other tools are a key intervention

How Parent Education Can Help Prevent/Minimize/Repair Resist-Refuse Problems

Resist-Refuse Issue:	What Helps- a better understanding of:
Child's Natural Affinity for a Parent	Child Development
Harsh/Authoritarian Parenting	Parenting styles and their impact; age-appropriate expectations
Parenting/Environmental Inconsistency	Structure, routines, limits, follow-through
Transition Resistance	Making transitions positive
Resistance to Changes, New People	Child's needs; timing of changes, new people

SEVERE Cases of Resist-Refuse

What can be done with a case of Severe resist-refuse?

Management by the Court

“It is important for judges to take control of alienation cases, to limit the possibility of manipulating the court process by the parents, and to ensure a firm and quick response to violations of court orders. These are cases for which judicial case management is especially appropriate.”

- Bala, Fidler, Goldberg, and Houston (2007)

What can the court do to maintain focus on the best interests of the children and move the case to a resolution in a just, timely, and affordable way?

- Early identification
- Setting rules and consequences
- Schedule out the steps
- Putting interim court orders in place

Parent-Child Contact Problems: Parent Guide

Developed by PIOS Subcommittee

I. Defining the Problem:

Sometimes an affinity for one parent, which is typical, can bloom into a child's rejecting of the other parent. Family dynamics and parental conflict often can make the problem worse.

II. Why are P-C contact problems problematic for kids?

Kids need a healthy relationship with both parents, and when there is a loss of contact with one parent, it can affect a child's ability to feel safe in any relationship. Repair of the problem early-on is critical for healing and minimizing long-term damage.

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III. How does the resist-refuse dynamic become such a problem?

Children lack coping skills to handle parental conflict. Sometimes kids reject one of their warring parents to stay out of the fight; others might 'side' with the parent they feel is 'weak' (or 'strong'), or align with a parent the child feels is sad or sick without the child. What can parents do to support a child's needs at the child's pace?

Consider the family system and ALL the possible reasons a child is struggling in their relationship with one parent. These reasons can stem from a combination of issues with the parents, the child, their home, and of course any unresolved conflict.

The next slide is an outline of some common and not-so-common reasons contact problems develop.

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Areas Where Contact Problems Can Arise:

Child	A child's temperament, and temperamental difference between parent and child; separation anxiety, need for structure, reassurance, especial care, etc.
Parent	Some parenting styles work better for kids than others. Differences in parenting styles, structures/routines in each or both parents' homes, consistency, harsh or lax parenting, unrealistic expectations, etc. can create conflict and resist-refuse dynamic. Problems can also arise when a parent has been absent or inconsistent in a child's life.
Home Environment	Sometimes challenges in a home (new environment, new people, struggles with chores, curfew, etc.) or the 'other home' can lead to a child's resist-refuse problem.
Co-Parent Conflict	Sometimes kids tell parents what they want to hear, creating confusion and parental conflict. Other kids feel it is their job to fight their parents' battles or they are given the role of messenger/spy by a parent.
Parent's support of a child's (unjustified) resistance-refusal	Parent may support unjustified resistance-refusal by their child to please the child, avoid a child's anger, or deal with the other parent.

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IV. What Can a Parent Do to Change Course?

Parenting Problems:

Parent Education

Family Therapy

Mediation

Better Communication/Negotiation Skills Between Parents

Safety Issues (abuse, neglect, lack of supervision, DV, poor parental decisions putting a child at risk, etc):

Investigation

Modified Parenting Plan to Support Safe Contact with Parent

Questions?

Please put any questions for the panelists in the chat.