

MYTH 5: Abusive fathers don't get custody.

- Abusive parents are more likely to seek sole custody than nonviolent ones...

American Psychological Association, Violence And The Family: Report Of The American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force On Violence And The Family, (1996), available at <http://www.apa.org/pi/viol&fam.html>

- ...and they are successful about 70% of the time.

American Judges Foundation, Domestic Violence and the Court House: Understanding the Problem...Knowing the Victim, available at <http://ajf.ncsc.dni.us/domviol/page5.html>

- Allegations of domestic violence have no demonstrated effect on the rate at which fathers are awarded custody of their children, nor do such allegations affect the rate at which fathers are ordered into supervised visitation. (i.e. abusers win unsupervised custody and visitation at the same rate as non-abusers)

Kernic, Monary-Ernsdorff, Koepsell & Holt, Children In The Crossfire: Child Custody Determinations Among Couples With A History Of Intimate Partner Violence 11(8) *Violence Against Women*, 991-1021 (2005).

MYTH 6: Fit mothers don't lose custody.

- Mothers who are victims of DV are often depressed and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, and as a result, can present poorly in court and to best-interest attorneys and/or custody evaluators.

J.M. Golding, Intimate Partner Violence As A Risk Factor For Mental Disorders: A Meta-Analysis, 14 *Journal of Family Violence* 99-132 (1999); Kernic, Monary-Ernsdorff, Koepsell & Holt, Children In The Crossfire: Child Custody Determinations Among Couples With A History Of Intimate Partner Violence 11(8) *Violence Against Women* 991-1021 (2005).

MYTH 7: Parental Alienation Syndrome ("PAS") is a scientifically sound phenomenon.

- The American Psychological Association has noted the lack of data to support so-called "parental alienation syndrome," and raised concern about the term's use.

American Psychological Association, Violence And The Family: Report Of The American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force On Violence And The Family, (1996), available at <http://www.apa.org/releases/passyndrome.html>

MYTH 8: Children are in less danger from a batterer/parent once the parents separate.

- Many batterers' motivation to intimidate and control their victims through the children *increases* after separation, due to the loss of other methods of exerting control.

Lundy Bancroft & Jay Silverman, The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Family Dynamics (2002); Langford, Isaac & Kabat, Homicides Related to Intimate Partner Violence in Massachusetts 1991-1995, *Peace at Home* (1999).

MYTH 9: Parents who batter are mentally ill, OR Parents with no evidence of mental illness cannot be batterers.

- Mental illness is found only in a minority of batterers.

Gondolf, MCMHill Results for Batterer Program Participants in Four Cities: Less "Pathological" Than Expected, 14(1) *Journal of Family Violence* 1-17 (1999); Gelles R. & Straus M, Intimate Violence (1988) (reporting that mental illness accounts for only 10% of abusive incidents).

- Psychological testing is not a good predictor of parenting capacity.

Brodzinsky, On the Use and Misuse of Psychological Testing in Child Custody Evaluations, 24(2) *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* 213-219 (1994).

- Mental health testing cannot distinguish a batterer from a non-batterer.

O'Leary, Through a Psychological Lens: Personality Traits, Personality Disorders, and Levels of Violence, in Current Controversies on Family Violence 7-30 (Gelles & Loseke, eds., 1993).

MYTH 10: If a child demonstrates no fear or aversion to a parent, then there is no reason not to award unsupervised contact or custody.

- Children can experience "traumatic bonding" with a parent who abuses the child or their other parent, forming unusually strong but unhealthy ties to a batterer as a survival technique (often referred to as "Stockholm Syndrome").

Lundy Bancroft & Jay Silverman, The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Family Dynamics, 39-40 (2002); Herman, Trauma and Recovery (1992).

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