

The '**Voice of the child**' puts inordinate demands on the young shoulders of alienated children because they are burdened by loyalty conflict and terrified of losing the love and care of their primary care-giver. It is astounding this is not recognised.

Children simply do not have the cognitive abilities to theorize what it would be like to have a loving parent eradicated from their lives. They are unable to discriminate what is rational and truthful amidst malicious, or fabricated, information.

Most importantly of all, they **do not have the emotional and cognitive abilities** to evaluate for themselves what is in their best interests. Nor do they have the emotional wherewithal to contradict the alienating parent whom they may be completely dependent upon.

Good Egg Safety teaches safer driving programmes for learner and novice drivers in schools, colleges and large corporate organisations. These programmes are designed to help them recognise their increased vulnerability on the roads. Drivers aged 17-25 are at the highest risk and they are significantly over-represented in the casualty figures.

We help them understand that the pre-frontal cortex is not fully developed until the age of twenty five. This critical part of the brain, which is responsible for 'executive function', includes the ability to recognise consequences.

Yet we are asking children under the age of sixteen – some as young as eight – to make **consequential executive decisions** which will have a life-time impact on them.

Given a genuine choice, children always want and need both parents.

Mental health professionals who are assessing, diagnosing and treating alienation – often caused by the trans-generational transmission of complex trauma suffered by an alienating parent – must be competent to do so.

As with all forms of domestic abuse, parental alienation can range from mild to severe. It is based on a spectrum. It is always the intention of parental alienation practitioners to maintain the child's relationship with both their parents, wherever possible.

Transfer of residence is only the very last resort – when it is clear that the psychopathology of the alienating parent is so severe, that to leave them within an abusive environment, would cause the child extreme ongoing harm.

The intention is always firstly to mitigate aberrant parental behaviours in order to remove the extreme loyalty binds children are placed in – where they are forced to 'choose' which parent to love.