



PARENTAL ALIENATION AWARENESS
ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND
Information sheet

Parental Alienation – Westermarck effect

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One Page Only

One of the outcomes of PA that is not well known, documented or discussed is the Westermarck effect in some families.

To understand it you first have to know about-

Oedipus complex

Oedipus complex denotes the emotions and ideas that the mind keeps in the unconscious, via dynamic repression, that concentrates upon a child's desire to sexually possess the parent of the opposite sex (e.g. males attracted to their mothers, whereas females are attracted to their fathers)¹

I suggest you follow the Wikipedia link at the footnotes and read up on the subject.

The Normal Moral household

Before discussing the Westermarck effect I need to discuss the normal household. Several actions between a parent and child of the opposite sex is innocent – e.g. (cultural differences should be taken into consideration)

- daughter waking up early and jump in bed with Mommy and Daddy on Daddy's side.
- Mommy entering the bathroom while the son is bathing, to make sure he washes under his arms.
- Daddy hugging daughter and in the process his one hand might be near her breast.
- Sister walks into Brother's room without knocking and see him not fully dressed.
- Father see daughter walking out of the bathroom wrapped only in a towel and the towel is today a little too high.

In most cultures the above examples is not seen as criminal. The natural morals in most

households will also ensure that it does not develop into a sexual issue. This also teaches the child and the parent the sexual taboos of life.

Alienated Parents or Siblings

In the case of alienated parents or siblings, the natural normal moral experience is lost. Brother and sister is not siblings any more but male and female. Mother and son or father and daughter is not parent and child – they are persons of the opposite sex.

This is the main cause of sexual dysfunction in alienated siblings or parents.

Westermarck effect

The **Westermarck effect**², or reverse sexual imprinting, is a hypothetical psychological effect through which people who live in close domestic proximity during the first few years of their lives become desensitized to later sexual attraction.

Genetic sexual attraction is a seldom-talked about phenomenon that frequently occurs between separated siblings through foster care or adoption or child and estranged parent.

It describes feelings of intense intimacy between two relatives who have been separated during the critical years of development and bonding, and then meet for the first time as adults.

Due to the extended separation the brain struggles to associate the other part as family and they become captivated with one another, sharing similar physical features, likes and dislikes, which is coupled with complex feelings of intimacy. This can lead both parties to express their emotions sexually.

Alienated parents and grown up children should know about this

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oedipus_complex

2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westermarck_effect