

cused on social skills development and anger management skills did not reduce interpersonal dependence in female perpetrators of IPV; their dependency needs increased by the end of the program. Women who withdrew from the program were more dependent and aggressive than those who completed it. Therefore, attachment style and interpersonal dependency may be relevant targets in developing treatment programs.

The chapter by Simmons *et al.* contrasts personality profiles of women and men referred for IPV treatment. Although men more commonly have dependent personality traits, abusive women evidence histrionic, narcissistic, and compulsive traits. Women are also more likely than men to have personality disorders. These findings suggest that treatment programs for this group of offenders should involve regulation of emotions and improving coping skills.

Victoria Titterington and Laura Harper, the authors of the fourth chapter, describe disproportionate female representation in intimate partner homicide perpetration relative to other types of violent offenses by women. In Houston, Texas, for example, 40 percent of intimate partner homicides were perpetrated by women, most of whom used guns to complete the act. The authors report that when women are violent, their victims are commonly their loved ones, and access to guns can result in fatal outcomes.

In the final chapter, gender differences in IPV recidivism were examined in samples from Portland, Oregon, and Memphis, Tennessee. The authors concluded that the men studied were more likely to reoffend, and the women were more likely to be victims in the future. A small group of women were the primary aggressors in their intimate relationships. Another group was involved in violent intimate relationships that tended toward mutual aggression. The authors contend that arguments that these groups of women should be treated differently in sentencing and treatment programs from women acting in self-defense have merit. Also, development of effective interventions in the prevention of both reoffending and future victimization is paramount as a public health concern.

This provocative, insightful book, which illuminates current research in female IPV, is recommended to mental health clinicians, particularly those involved with planning programs for batterers

and those interested in learning more about women as perpetrators and victims of IPV. Professionals who understand the motivation for IPV, its context, and women's risk factors, can guide policy and program development and implementation. This informative book also may help professionals who seek to provide unbiased evaluations and rehabilitation services for these women.

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Susan Hatters Friedman, MD  
Cleveland, OH

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## Relocation Issues in Child Custody Cases

Edited by Philip M. Stahl and Leslie M. Drozd. New York: The Haworth Press, Inc., 2006. 181 pages. \$150.00, hardcover; \$45.95, paperback.

*Relocation Issues in Child Custody Cases* addresses one of the most challenging matters that child custody evaluators encounter in a mobile society. The chapters in this book were published as articles in the 2006 *Journal of Child Custody (JCC)*. The articles were edited by two psychologists: Dr. Leslie M. Drozd, who is Editor in Chief of the *JCC*, and Dr. Philip M. Stahl, who served as a guest editor for the issue. Stahl's goal was to produce a book that has "a multi-disciplinary tone for a multi-disciplinary audience." The authors include psychology professors, a law professor, practicing attorneys, and judges.

One of the pivotal cases in parental relocation, *In re Marriage of LaMusga*,<sup>1</sup> is examined by Stahl, who served as the child custody expert during the adjudication. In this case, the California Supreme Court held that a custodial parent does not have a presumptive legal right to relocate. That is, a court may reevaluate a custody agreement if a noncustodial parent is able to show that the custodial parent's relocation will be detrimental to the children.

Psychology professors William Fabricius and Sanford Braver update their 2003 study<sup>2</sup> of the impact of parental relocation. The authors' findings remain unchanged: maternal relocation is associated with,

but not necessarily a cause of, “negative impacts on children’s long-term relationships with their fathers, their adjustment to their parents’ divorce, and their ongoing experience of their parents’ relationship.” This is true, assert the researchers, even when controlling for parental conflict and domestic violence. They contend that relocation does not necessarily reduce parent conflict and that additional research on the effects of parental relocation on children is needed.

Trends among the courts are examined by law professor Linda Elrod, who says that courts are moving toward a case-by-case application of the best-interests-of-the-child standard, and away from presumptions that either parent has the right to move unless shown otherwise. She includes a helpful summary chart of each state’s relocation statutes, including whether the presumption is for or against a relocating parent.

Psychologists William Austin and Jonathan Gould examine three aspects of performing custody evaluations that involve parental relocation: predicting potential harm to the child for each parent’s proposed parenting plan or relocation; using an investigative model to identify real-life factors; and comparing real-life factors against predictive factors. The authors offer recommendations for suitable alternative parenting plans based on those factors. They propose that the mirror image of the best-interests standard is the least detrimental alternative. That is, the effects of custody and divorce on a child are inherently negative, and the task of any custody agreement is to mitigate such negative effects.

The potential damage to the child due to a parent’s relocating or making alternative parenting plans should be evaluated systematically, contends Austin. He describes seven factors that are relevant to predicting the degree of risk for potential harm to the child. They are the child’s age; the geographical distance of the relocation; the degree of involvement by the non-relocating parent; the degree of parental conflict (including history of domestic violence); the temperament of the child; the degree of stability of the relocating parent; and the ability of the relocating parent to support the child’s relationship to the other parent. Austin’s list will be helpful to mental health evaluators who contemplate these matters when performing child custody evaluations.

Stahl’s article on avoiding bias is aimed at both evaluators and judges. He references the article of

Thomas Gutheil and Robert Simon<sup>3</sup> on experts’ biases and extrapolates from it to identify several potential areas of bias in evaluating and adjudicating relocation cases. Stahl agrees somewhat with the other authors that evaluators should not decide the ultimate issue (for or against one parent or another) in these cases; rather, evaluations will be most helpful to the court when they present the family dynamics and analyze data that are specific to a particular family.

Stahl advises that three sets of recommendations be presented to the judge, which would allow the court to make recommendations regardless of the ultimate finding: The recommendations should provide guidance to a judge who grants the modified custody petition, declines the modified petition, and chooses to compromise by rendering a blended solution. This approach will offer the judge options to consider, even if a parent withdraws a motion or chooses to relocate along with the other parties.

Judge Martha Lott’s article is intended for her colleagues. She provides a simple yet solid method for judges to use in analyzing evidence in relocation cases. She asks judges to determine the child’s developmental stage and primary needs; each parent’s provision for the child; the location where those needs will best be met; the optimal parenting plan and its worst-case scenario; and the equitable considerations between the parents or what circumstances should be balanced so that the resulting custody agreement is as fair as possible.

This book is recommended to anyone in the field of child custody or of any discipline. Drozd and Stahl have accomplished their objective of providing insight into a most difficult subject to a wide range of professionals in various disciplines.

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Bernardo J. Mora, MD  
Modesto, CA

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