

How Does Your Past Affect Your Present Estrangement?

The best tools that estranged parents can have in their arsenal is the ability to forgive themselves, develop self-compassion and remember what they did right as parents. That's because the ability to deal with an estranged child, the estranged child's spouse, or other contributing family members requires a LOT of emotional resilience and resilience is based on these properties.

Sadly, parents who were neglected, abused, or mistreated in some other way in their childhoods often have the most trouble holding onto those feelings. They are typically far more vulnerable to feeling overwhelmed with feelings of guilt, regret, even self-hatred. They also get more confused by their children's accusations.

If the parent made serious mistakes, they have a harder time seeing those mistakes in perspective and moving toward self-love and self-forgiveness. They may feel less entitled to push back when it's appropriate with their child and less able to hear their child's complaints as a complaint, and not as a referendum on their value as a human being.

Tragically, these parents are the ones who are typically the most likely to have behaved in problematic ways with their own children because of the lack of good role models. All of this means that parents with their own difficult childhoods need more help in navigating the already treacherous path of healing from estrangement.