



I know it can be hard to figure out how to help your child cope when the other parent is using the silent treatment or actively alienating your child from you. It's emotionally challenging and painful, with lasting effects on both you and your child. But know that there are practical and effective ways to support your child to help them build resilience and coping skills.

Here is a resource to better understand what the issue looks like. In the 1970s, psychologist Edward Tronick conducted a study known as the Still Face Experiment, which demonstrated the negative effects of emotional unresponsiveness on infants. The study showed that when a caregiver failed to respond to an infant's emotional cues, the infant experienced almost immediate distress, becoming agitated. (It can also show up as withdrawn).

**See an example:**

A parent giving their child the silent treatment is unfortunately a powerful way to alienate the child from the other parent. In these cases, the child often feels confused, and helpless, even blaming themselves for the situation.

**Here are some tips to help your child cope with the silent treatment or parental alienation:**

1. **Acknowledge your child's experience.** It's vital to validate your child's feelings and let them know what they're experiencing is **not** their fault. Encourage them to express their emotions. Let them know, often, that it's okay to feel upset, angry, or sad.
2. **Create positive interactions.** Make sure your child has positive interactions with you and other supportive family members or friends. This helps counteract the negative effects of emotional unresponsiveness and provides your child with a better sense of security and stability.
3. **Foster resilience.** Encourage your child to engage in activities that promote resilience like sports, hobbies, or creative projects. These activities can go a long way in helping build their confidence and sense of self-worth.
4. **Seek professional support.** Consider working with a therapist or counselor who can provide additional emotional support. A therapist can help you develop strategies for dealing with the silent treatment and other behaviors which are the hallmark of parental alienation.

Remember, dealing with silent treatment or parental alienation is not easy, but with patience and persistence, you can help your child cope and build resilience. Always Keep in mind that your child's emotional well-being should always come first (along with your own, (think "Put your own oxygen mask on first")), and don't be afraid to seek professional help if you need it.