

# MALE VICTIMS OF ABUSE

## THE SYSTEM'S COERCIVE CONTROL & VICTIMIZATION

### WHY WE NEED CHANGE

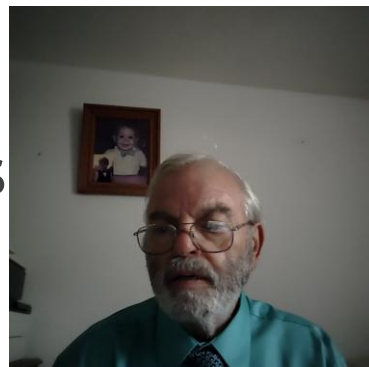
Edward Tavares  
Child Watch Bermuda



Dr. Helen Smith  
**“MEN ON STRIKE”**

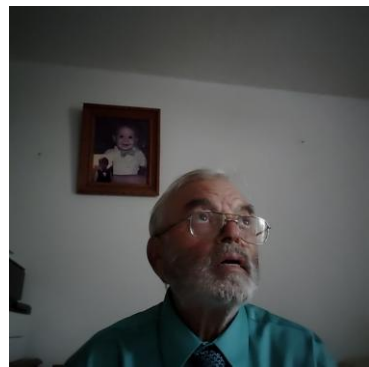
**Why Men Are Boycotting Marriage & Fatherhood....** (2015)

- ▶ Becoming an anti-male society
  - ▶ Why should men participate in a system that seems to be stacked against them?
- ▶ Dropping out of college
- ▶ Leaving the work force
- ▶ Avoiding marriage and fatherhood, at alarming rates
- ▶ Acting “defensibly” or rationally in response to lack of incentives offers them to be responsible fathers, husbands and providers

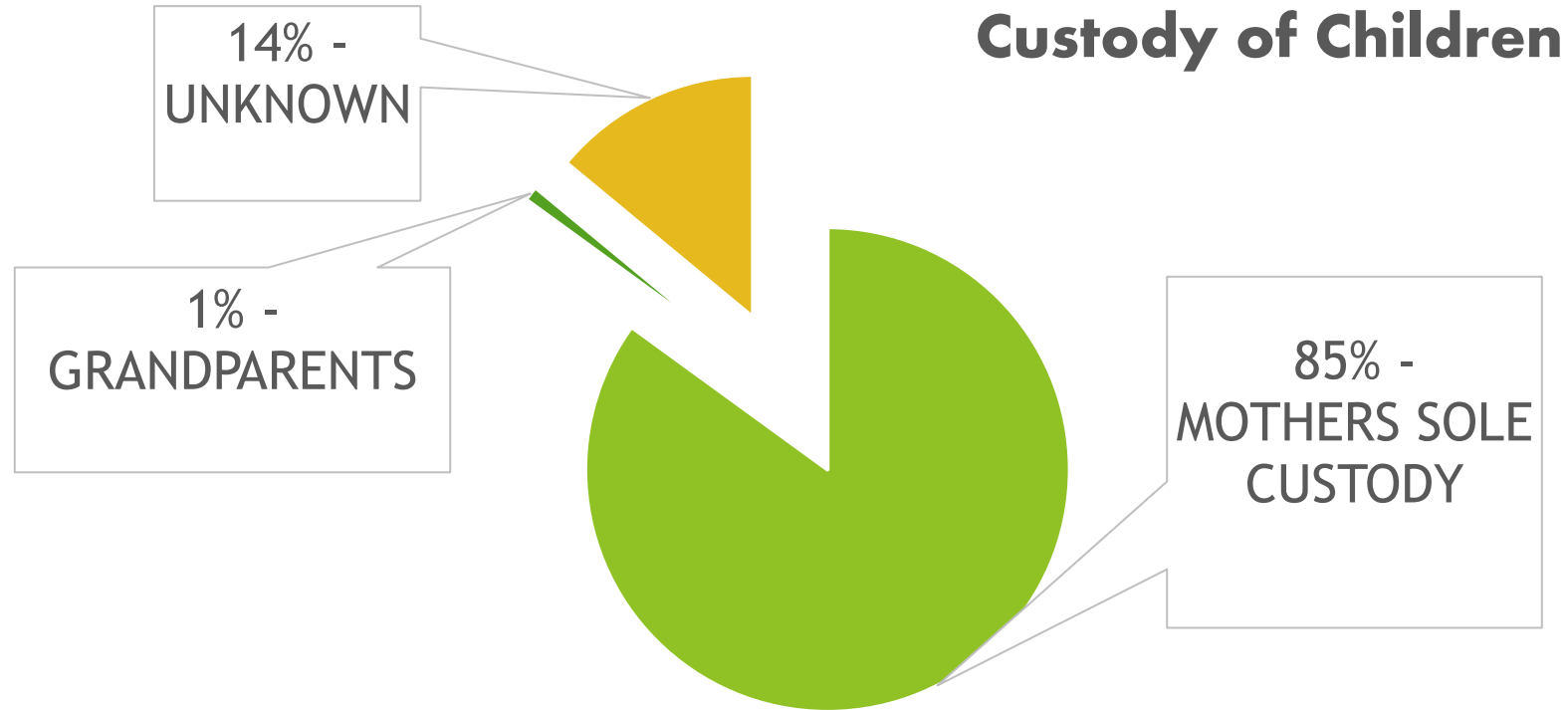


# Bermuda's Fatherhood Treatment Post-divorce/Separation

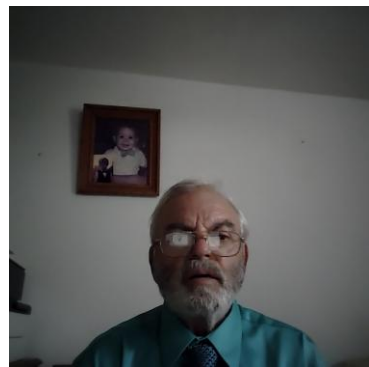
- ➔ Post-separation/divorce--most fathers are relegated to visitor status
- ➔ Fathers given visitations of children on weekends, bi-weekly
- ➔ Occasional Wednesdays
- ➔ Amounting roughly to 48 days per calendar year



# Bermuda 2006 Statistics Post-separation

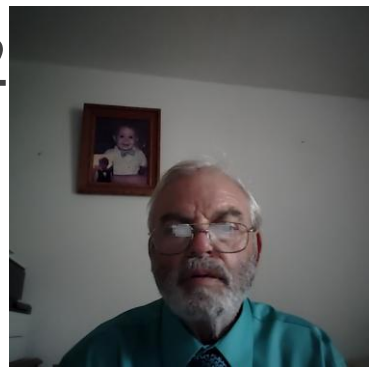


- 85% - MOTHERS SOLE CUSTODY
- 1% - GRANDPARENTS
- 14% - UNKNOWN



# Prior to 2002: The Affiliation Act was Discriminatory to Unwed Fathers

- ▶ Fathers could not take mother to court
- ▶ Mothers were the only ones that could bring court proceedings
- ▶ No DNA testing granted
- ▶ Court/social services only took the mother's word
- ▶ Many fathers paying for children not theirs
  - ▶ E.g., One child - 6 men paying child support for the same child
- ▶ ChildWatch advocated in 2002 the "Children's Amendment Act 2" which passed, and legitimized un-wed fathers
- ▶ Discrimination against both married and unmarried fathers



# Most Children Suffer Traumas “ACE” (Adverse Childhood Experiences)



➤ Coercive control (University Lancashire, 2022)



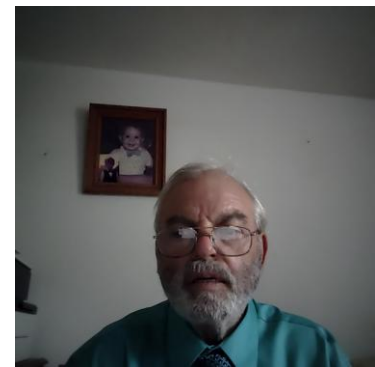
➤ Parental alienation syndrome (Dr. Richard Gardner, 1985)



➤ Parental gate-keeping (William Austin, 2018)

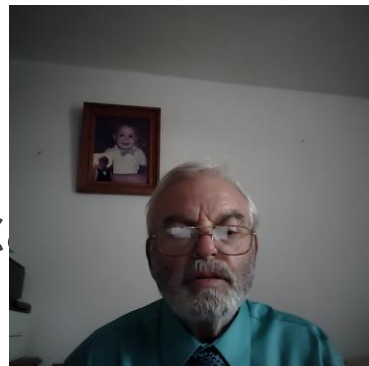


➤ A child held hostage (Dr. Stanley Crowar & Brynne Rivlin, 2013)



# Police, Court, Child & Family Services, and the Legal System

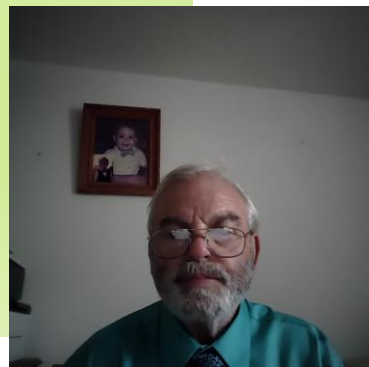
- ▶ Police do not enforce court visitation orders
- ▶ Family court only enforces child support orders
- ▶ Courts do not enforce court order for visitation with child
- ▶ Fathers are demeaned and disenfranchised
- ▶ When mothers give up their custodial rights:
  - ❖ Fathers are not given custody to their children
  - ❖ Child is given up to foster care or adoption
  - ❖ Often fathers are not allowed to see their child once in foster c



# COERCIVE CONTROL VIA THE SYSTEM

## WOMEN'S GROUPS . . .

- Gain government and corporate funding
- Get sympathy from government and courts
  - ❖ Lobby for more laws against fathers
- Send fathers threatening/harassing letters
  - ❖ Win custody, without any investigations
  - ❖ Based on one-sided claim and calls
- Drum-up hype and hysteria
- Give false appearances and data
- Keep fathers from their children--alienation





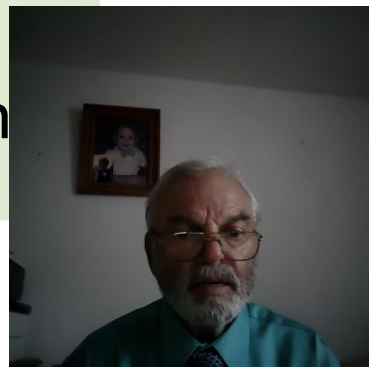
# University of Lancashire UK Study (2022)

8 OUT 10

- Male victims' scores indicate post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a clinical concern

43%

- Male victims' distress scores high enough to suppress immune system

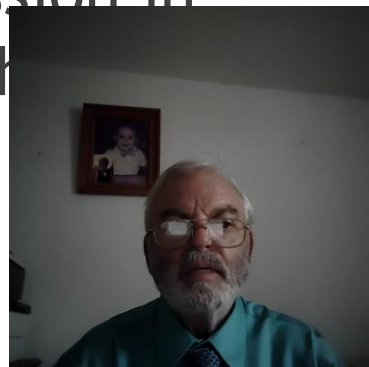


# COERCION VIA “THE SYSTEM”

(Hines, Douglas, & Berger, 2015)

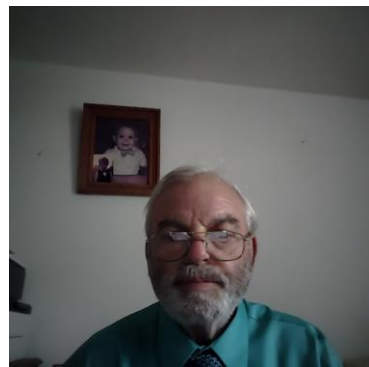
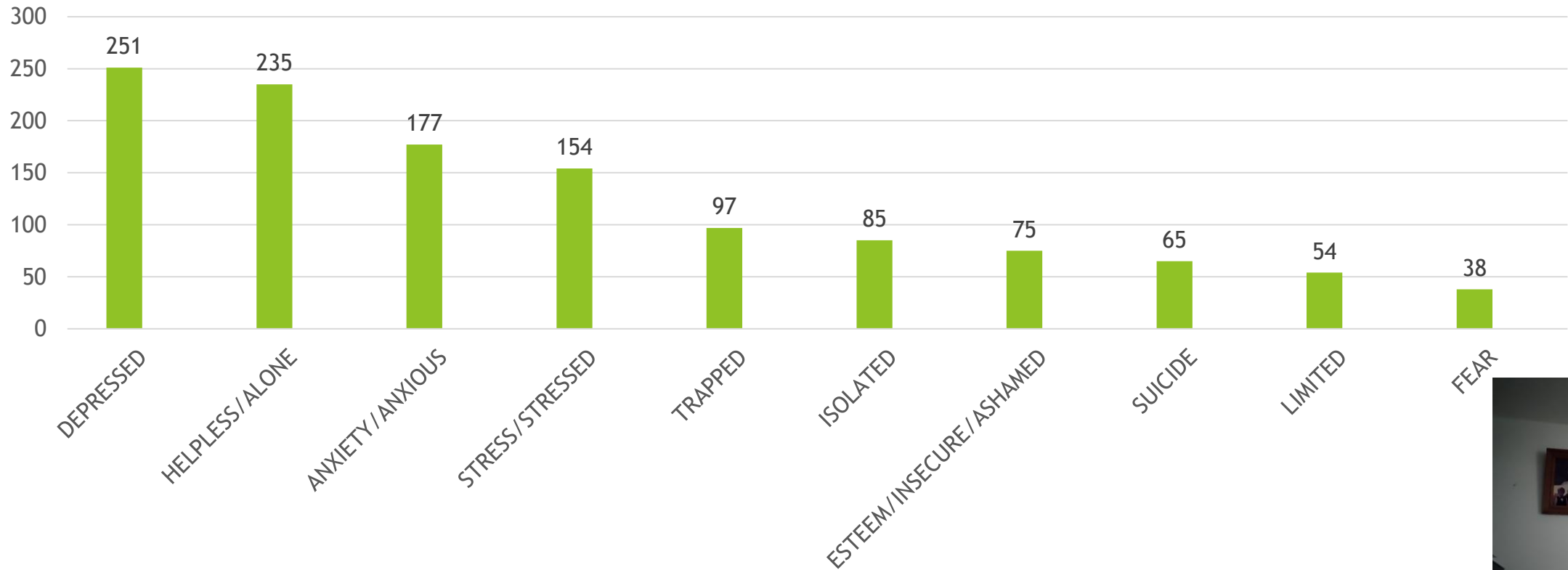
## “LEGAL & ADMINISTRATION ABUSE”

- ▶ “Legal & administration abuse”-“(LA)” intimate abuse is a form of coercive control that appears to be particularly salient to male victims
- ▶ “LA abuse” is used when a partner uses the police, social services and the courts to coerce a man into complying with their demands
- ▶ “LA abuse” is possible because men as victims are largely invisible to professionals working with domestic abuse
- ▶ “LA abuse” is associated with more symptoms of PTSD and depression in male victims and associated with problematic behaviour of their children (Hines, et al., 2015)



# (Cont'd) Results Revealed How Men Describe the Abuse Impact: Depression, Helpless, Anxiety, Stress, Feeling Trapped, Fear of False Allegations and Losing Their Children

## Abuse Impact Described By Fathers



## (Cont'd) Men's Experiences of Controlling Behaviours

### POST SEPARATION

53% Use the courts to continue the abuse

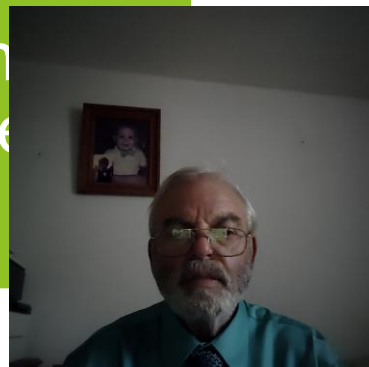
39% Interfere in new relationship

59% Use finances to continue the abuse

58% Break the contact order

48% Use the police to continue the abuse

63% Use the children to continue the abuse



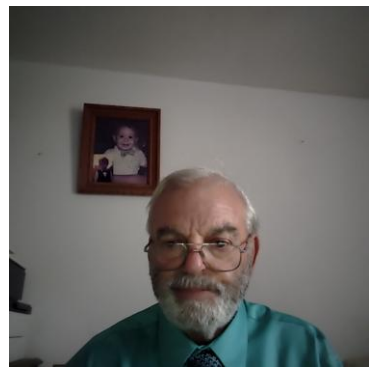
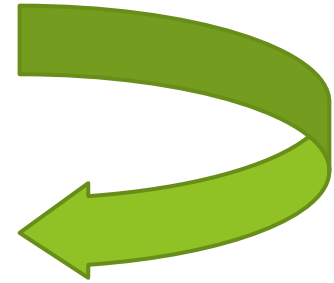
# Recommendations

Dr. Linda Nielsen (2018)

Meta Analysis of 60 Studies Reveal: Post Separation

## “Presumption of shared parenting”

- Lessens conflict
- Results in better outcomes for children
- Allows fathers 35% minimum to 50% time with child



# THANK YOU!



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