

# Tribunal Annulment Cases: Clinical Considerations Where Domestic Violence Has Occurred

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# Role of the Psychological Assessor

- **Assisting the Judge in understanding the facts through a psychological / developmental lens**
- **Reviewing testimony and conducting interview(s) with the parties to the case**
- **Particularly involved with situations where the persons level of discretion or ability to fulfill marital obligations are in question**
- **Use my professional training in the encounter with persons to provide care and guidance**

# The Consulting Side

- **Cycle of Violence**
  - **Technically begins with “set up”**
    - **Followed by apology**
    - **A resumption of “life as usual”**
  - **In some Tribunal cases, courtship is remarkably calm and conflict – free**
- **Abuser’s Issues**
  - **Own history of abuse or other family dysfunction**

# Pope Francis, *Amoris laetitia*, 239-40

## Old Wounds ...

“(some) love with an adolescent love marked by hostility, bitter criticism and the need to blame others.”

“Many people leave childhood without ever having felt unconditional love. ... A poor relationship with one’s parents and siblings, if left unhealed, can reemerge and hurt a marriage...”



# The Counseling Side

- **Child of God**
  - Feelings of shame, fear, depression
- **Facilitate Understanding**
  - dysfunctional patterns in relationships
  - establishing a safe home and relationships
- **Aggressors**
  - In need of treatment themselves, but must acknowledge

# Pope Francis, *Amoris laetitia*, 51

“...family relationships can also explain the tendency to a violent personality. This is often the case with families where communication is lacking, defensive attitudes predominate, the members are not supportive of one another, family activities that encourage participation are absent, the parental relationship is frequently conflictual and violent, and relationships between parents and children are marked by hostility...”

# Conclusion

- CASES
- QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION