

POST ADOPTION RESOURCE CENTER

Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 1

Adoptive and Foster Parent Support Groups

**Due to the ongoing pandemic, the support group format has changed to online only via Zoom until further notice.*

Third Thursday of Each Month

7:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting:

Meeting ID: 863 1655 1136

Password: 123

No RSVP necessary.

**We will build a community of support!
Join other current or prospective foster,
adoptive and guardian parent in building a
community of support.**

For more information and/or to RSVP, contact:

[Rhonda Boshears](mailto:rhonda@upkids.com) at rhonda@upkids.com or 906-281-3420

[Alysa Sutinen](mailto:alysa@upkids.com) at alysa@upkids.com or 906-250-0393

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www.upkids.com

Contact a PARC Specialist

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Check out upcoming events,
webinars, and resources on our
Facebook page:

U.P. Post Adoption Resource Center



Coming Together
Sharing Together
Working Together
Succeeding
Together

The Post Adoption Resource Center is a program of U.P. KIDS and is funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

The Seven Core Issues of Adoption

By Rhonda Boshears, Post Adoption Specialist

All of the people who are touched before, during and after an adoption are considered to be members of the adoption constellation and share seven core issues in their adjustments over time. The seven core issues are loss, rejection, shame/guilt, grief, identity, intimacy and mastery/control.

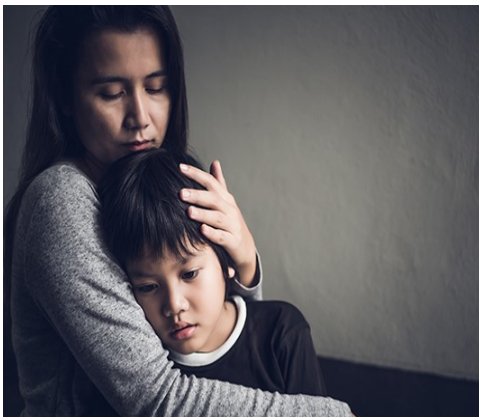
Loss is the fact or process of losing something or someone. The contradiction of loss in the adoption paradigm is, in order for someone to adopt/gain a child, someone else must lose that same child, which could include parents, family members, and maybe even siblings. The child's family tree has been forever altered and adopted children may lose access to historical, genetic and vital health information which may become relevant in the future. Our adopted children may lose their racial, ethnic, cultural and language connections; they may lose friends, neighborhoods, schools, foster families, people they love and trust and perhaps even beloved pets.



Social rejection is one of the core losses that may be experienced by the adopted child and by constellation members as well. Rejection is a perceived loss of a sense of belonging; loss of group inclusion or loss of social acceptance. Because human connection is a basic need, being rejected can cause feelings of unworthiness, decreased personal value, feelings of abandonment or isolation, or difficulties fitting in with peers. In addition, adopted children may personalize their losses and take on responsibility for things that they perceive as their fault. Feelings of rejection can encompass a vast array of thoughts, emotions and behaviors including, but not limited to, anger, depression, anxiety, sadness and withdrawal. The paradox of rejection is that the more we feel rejected, the more we reject attempts to make connections.

“Grief is not a disorder, disease, or sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical, and spiritual necessity – the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve.” (Earl Grollman)

Where there is loss, there is grief. Adoption and permanency losses can often be left unnamed, unacknowledged and un-grieved. The contradiction of adoption-grief is that our society views adoption as a “gain”, a problem-solving event, the very opposite of loss, and something to feel happy about. It can be difficult to understand why one would grieve when the outcome has such obvious positive benefits for everyone. Adoption is a life-altering event; adopted children may not understand their grief and may not have the skills to express what they are feeling.



“Guilt is just as powerful, but its influence is positive, while shame is destructive. Shame erodes our courage and fuels disengagement.” (Brene’ Brown)

There are many byproducts of rejection including feelings of shame and or guilt. Shame relates what one believes about oneself. Adopted children may internalize feeling unworthy of love or of not being good enough, and may have low self-esteem which can lead to anxiety and defensive behaviors. Shame can be experienced very early in life, as young as 15 months of age, and is deeply wired into our brains making it more difficult to reverse. Shame is maladaptive but it is a pervasive issue that can limit an individual's perception of love and the ability to give and receive love.

The Seven Core Issues of Adoption, Cont'd.

By Rhonda Boshears, Post Adoption Specialist

Identity is one of the most important aspects of our lives. Most of us know who we are, where we come from, and have deep roots that include us within the familial structure. Adopted children lose their place in their first/birth family lineage and may feel as though their identity is incomplete. The feeling of incompleteness can be far reaching because they are missing a broad spectrum of information about their genetics, religious background, ethnicity, race, culture, language, and other historical information. It can be difficult for adopted children to understand where they fit or to express who they are because their personal story is broken.



Identity issues can arise if the adopted children having bonding issues with an adoptive parent, or when adopted children search and find their first family and a reunion takes place. Adoption is a life-altering event, but according to *Sharon Kaplan Roszia and Allison Davis Maxon*, "If constellation members have acknowledged and identified their losses, examined feelings or fears of rejection, become aware of any issues connected to shame and guilt, and addressed their grief process, they have the opportunity to build a cohesive identity that includes their adoption and permanency status."

The core issues of loss, grief, rejection, identity, shame and guilt, and lack of control over early-life decisions can interfere with the individual's interactions and create barriers to intimacy. Working on the intimacy issue requires a great deal of trust, communication and vulnerability from children, and from adults. Discussing topics that are uncomfortable and participating in painful conversations with their children is important because intimacy issues that are not addressed can hinder the development of important parent-child relationships.

Adoption is marked by loss of control for everyone involved throughout the process. Adopted children do not always have the opportunity to choose where they will live or with whom they will live. The adoptive parents had no control over what happened to the child or to the first/birth family before the adoption took place. Constellation members have little to no control over the court's decisions regarding the child's future nor do they have much control over the child's life after the adoption. Through each stage of development in a child's life the desire for power, control and autonomy increases.



The Seven Core Issues of Adoption, Cont'd

By Rhonda Boshears, Post Adoption Specialist

Traumatic losses and multiple attachment disruptions can diminish the child's need to feel connected, secure, valued and empowered. Examples of the child's need for control include intolerance of parental control, dominating play with others, parenting behaviors with other children and adults, becoming upset, distressed and/or angry at having their control questioned, extreme distress at hearing "no." The ultimate goal is for the children and the constellation to regain control and power over one's life. According to *Sharon Kaplan Roszia and Allison Davis Maxon*, Constellation members gain a sense of mastery when:

- Their own core issues are acknowledged and addressed,
- They can identify their strengths, needs, and value to themselves and others,
- They clarify what they were able to control and not control,
- They can forgive themselves and others for decisions/mistakes that were made,
- They can acknowledge other constellation members' losses, challenges and pain,
- They clarify the lessons that they have learned and take the time to celebrate their accomplishments, their resiliency, strengths, and gains.

Below are links to information regarding 7 core issues of adoption and permanency.

<https://www.nacac.org/resource/seven-core-issues-in-adoption-and-permanency/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/shame/201305/the-difference-between-guilt-and-shame>

<https://7summitpathways.com/blog/shame-vs-guilt/>

<https://www.nicabm.com/guilt-vs-shame/>

<https://www.nacac.org/resource/3-5-7-model-work-through-grief/>

<https://www.nacac.org/help/parenting/grief-and-loss/>

<https://northstarconsultingassociates.com/eight-core-constellations-in-adoption/>

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/preplacement/coreissues/>

<https://bethany.org/media/resources/ebook/seven-core-issues-ebook-download.pdf>

<https://www.rainbowkids.com/adoption-stories/connecting-with-our-children-7-core-issues-in-adoption-1909>

<https://www.kidsinthehouse.com/adoption/parenting-adopted-children/common-challenges/adopted-kids-and-control-issues>

<https://thechildpsychologyservice.co.uk/advice-strategy/controlling-behaviour/>



The Three Pillars of Adoption

By Dana Munn, Post Adoption Specialist

“The Three Pillars framework is designed to inform and empower those who live with or work with young people who have been exposed to chronic adversity, including parents, foster parents, residential care workers, teachers, custodial workers and others.” (Bath)

All children that have entered into the foster care system have experienced trauma, whether from the experience alone of being taken into a new residence to stay, or the combination of abuse, neglect, mistreatment, lack of stability or affection, or mental illness. Trauma-informed care can make a huge difference in the lives of these children, which can be described as having three pillars: Safety, Connections, and Managing Emotions.

A key to helping those who have experienced trauma to heal from that is creating a safe place in which the survivor can exist. The safe place a foster or adoptive home provides may be the very first safe place in which a foster or adoptive child has existed. Safety is a basic human need, thought to be related to developing trust and connection. Developing safety has many aspects that come into play, including having age appropriate expectations and fostering self-efficacy by involving the child in decision making through respectful conversation to allow for a feeling of some control and importance. Consistency along with open and honest communication can build security.

Children that have experienced trauma may have a difficult time bonding with others, especially adults, as they may associate adults with the negative experiences they have encountered. Care providers must face the complexity of rebuilding those associations and proving to traumatized youth that some adults are caring and loving, while also teaching about when to not trust an adult. Human connections are the basis for human interaction and a basic need for people to thrive and experience positive social encounters.

An important part of growing up is learning to regulate behavior and manage emotions. When these skills are not taught properly or children have to use regulation for survival instead of proper social and personal development, lack of regulation can be persistent and difficult to work on.



Trauma-informed care is vital to provide an umbrella of safe situations to allow the child to practice and solidify regulating techniques. Physiological effects of trauma can cause increased difficulty in emotional and behavioral management, ever emphasizing the need for trauma-informed adults to be part of the atmosphere of healing for the child, in as many areas of care as possible. Adults who may co-regulate, help name emotions, actively listen, assist in self-reflection and problem-solving, provide suggestions for regulatory methods with respect and empathy can make all the difference in the world to a child that may have never had an adult provide such care in their past.

The Three Pillars, Howard Bath

https://www.hope.ms.gov/sites/mccj/files/Hope%20training%20January%202021/read_3%20Pillars%20of%20TIC.pdf



Foster Parent Picnic Event

By Lauri Gaskins, Post Adoption Specialist

On August 19, 2021, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Sault Tribe, UP KIDS, Bay Mills, and Great Lakes Recovery Center hosted a Foster Parent Appreciation Picnic at Sherman Park. The day was filled with fun times and laughter. Participants enjoyed swimming, playing games, and eating subs from Subway. We were even joined by the local community law enforcement agencies:

- Chippewa County Sheriff's Department,
- Sault Ste. Marie Tribal Police,
- Sault Ste. Marie Fire Department,
- Sault Ste. Marie Police Department,
- Sault Ste. Marie Ambulance,
- and the ice cream truck.



Past Events and Trainings

We hope everyone had a fantastic National Adoption Month in November. You are appreciated for the impact you make and kindness you share.

Thank you to everyone that attended the MYOI panel discussion in December, learning more about the experiences of the panelists who had been in foster care.

It was a privilege to learn more about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) with master trainer Sue Kauppi of the Western U.P. Health Department, at our hosted webinar that was held in December.

More learning opportunities and events ahead!

We Are Here For You!

Let us know what you would like us to do for you!

What questions or concerns do you have that would interest you for training topics?

What activities would you like to see us host for your family?

How can we help you through our support groups?

Do you have any other ideas or suggestions?

Contact us through email, phone, or our Facebook page!

