

POST ADOPTION RESOURCE CENTER

Newsletter

Adoptive and Foster Parent Support Groups

Our monthly support group is now offered online via Zoom and in-person through a hybrid format. In-person meetings are available at various locations.

Third Thursday of each month

7 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting:

Meeting ID: 819 2796 4032

Password: 123

No RSVP necessary.

Join other current or prospective foster, adoptive and guardian parents.

All information shared will be kept confidential.

For more information and/or to RSVP, contact:

Alysa Sutinen at alysa@upkids.com or 906-250-0393

Dana Munn at dana@upkids.com or 906-281-3998

Eve Giraud-Prosser at eve@upkids.com or 906-281-9091

Shifra Cooper at shifra@upkids.com or 906-748-0022



Coming Together
Sharing Together
Working Together
Succeeding
Together

Volume 4 Issue 2

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UPkids.com

Contact a PARC Specialist

Escanaba 906-748-0022

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Check out upcoming events, webinars and resources on our

Facebook page:

U.P. Post Adoption Resource Center

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

Seven Core Issues of Adoption and Permanency: Loss

Shifra Cooper, post-adoption specialist

As we dive deeper into the seven core issues of adoption and permanency, it is important to remember that these issues are not a reflection of the adoptive family, the adoptee or the birth family. It should also be noted that the seven core issues can affect everyone in the adoption constellation.

Loss is a universal experience. We've all experienced loss in one way or another, whether small, large, abstract or concrete, it is part of being human. When we look at loss, specifically normative loss, there are certain experiences we share but for those involved in adoption and guardianship, there are losses that are unique, shared only by others who have experienced a similar story. All adoptive, kinship and guardianships are created out of some loss.

Concrete losses are physical losses and may include the loss of family members, relationships, homes, bedrooms, a role within a family and belongings. Abstract losses are losses that may include the loss of the fantasy or dream of what may have been or could have been. These losses, which often include a lack of closure, can leave people searching for answers and can delay the process of grieving.

There are three types of losses that include concrete and abstract losses that affect all members of the adoption constellation. Losses can be ambiguous where the feelings of loss are vague, leaving a person searching for answers through questions or even in their environment to make sense of things. Losses can also be vicarious where traumatic memories or experiences have been embedded into the senses often triggered in stressful situations or by something in the environment. Secondary losses are those that can also be experienced when a loss is brought to a person's attention like a holiday, a school project or a question.



All adoption constellation members may experience a loss of relationships, roles, family members, time, privacy, dreams, and feelings of power. They may also experience a loss of hopes and dreams and a loss of chances to be seen for who they are. People may experience loss of their culture and friends, or they may feel isolated or shunned by family or friends, leading to additional feelings of loss.





Difficulty with transitions or making decisions, whether small or large, depression, anxiety and guilt. An adoptee who is struggling with loss may also have trouble coping with routine losses, may experience dysregulation or express upset feelings about the loss. For adults, their symptoms of loss may be similar to youth.

Tools for dealing with loss are extremely important for all involved. Healing can begin when a safe, open place is available for discussion of losses.

Some ways to engage in discussion of loss include:

- Give yourself and others grace and time.
- Address the loss and the emotions involved.
- Be a voice for the loss.
- Keep expectations reasonable.
- Model appropriate feelings of loss openly when possible.
- Give yourself and others permission to grieve.
- Adjust family rituals, when possible, to include acknowledgement of a loss. This could be as simple as mentioning or acknowledging someone, something or adding a simple item to represent the loss.
- Create a Loss Box where you keep your difficult feelings of stress around loss. This box can be imaginative or physical. For a physical box you can create a box that can be decorated and add items that represent different losses that have been experienced.
- Contact a mental health professional who is informed about adoption issues



Mental Illness in Youth

Dana Munn, post-adoption specialist

Mental health is important to all aspects of our lives, from work to school, to relationships and self-worth. It can be defined in regards to one's overall psychological and emotional well-being. Positive mental health can help individuals have a higher overall quality of life.

Mental health problems are generally more common than most people realize. It is estimated that in 2020, one in five American adults experienced a mental health issue one in six young people experienced a major depressive episode, and one in twenty Americans lived with a serious mental illness. These estimations show how often people encounter mental illness.

Young adults and children can also struggle with mental health issues, with half of those that struggle showing signs of symptoms at an age younger than 14 years old, yet only half will receive treatment. This is alarming when it's noted that suicide is the leading cause of death in our country, with it being the second leading cause of death for youth between the ages of 10 and 24. This is almost twice as high as the number of homicides that occurred that year.



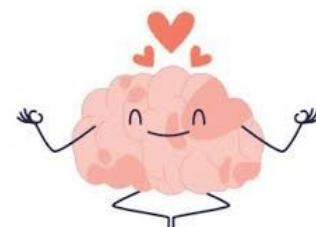
The most common mental illnesses diagnosed in children are attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity (ADHD), anxiety, behavior problems and depression, according to the Center for Disease Control. It is important to intervene as early as symptoms arise in young children to better prevent further onset of concurrent mental illnesses and developmental disorders. Knowing warning signs and risk factors can help with seeking care when needed, before suicidal ideation becomes an issue. Prevention is the most effective way to give the best assistance to youth struggling with mental illness or disorder. Open communication is a great way to let youth know

that there is a safe person to talk to, especially when labels are avoided and respectful active listening is present. Knowing accessible resources and facts about mental health and illness can allow for youth to better attain mental health care.

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>

<https://www.apa.org/topics/children/mental-health>

<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/>



The Winter Blues

Eve Giraud-Prosser, post-adoption specialist

Living in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan during the winter time can bring on the winter blues, and for some people, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). The Collin's dictionary defines the winter blues as a feeling of depression or deep unhappiness associated with the cold and darkness of winter. SAD is also in the DSM-5 as a Major Depression Disorder with a Seasonal Pattern. Having the winter blues shouldn't significantly impact your ability to enjoy life even if you're feeling down a little more than usual. If your mood starts to affect your everyday life because of the winter blues, it may be time to reach out to a professional.



Many caregivers provide care for youth with mood disorders, learning disabilities or sensory processing issues. When the winter blues or SAD gets added into the mix, it can be overwhelming. Sunlight deprivation can result in additional symptoms like unhappiness, irritability, depression, and anxiety. It can also result in interrupted sleep patterns, especially when individuals have a hard time getting to sleep at night then struggle to get up in the morning. With that, motivation and productivity can go down.

There are many different ideas that can help everyone with the winter blues or SAD. Spending time outdoors as often as possible can increase sunlight exposure resulting in raised vitamin D levels. There are many outdoor activities to help with spending time outside, including walking, skiing, sledding, or skating. Staying active is important whether inside or outside. Some great indoor activities to try as a family include having a dance party, trying various yoga activities, making an obstacle course, or using exercise equipment.

When limited to the indoors a phototherapy light can make a difference by daily exposure for about 20-30 minutes. The Mayo Clinic states that this can result in a chemical change in your brain which can make you happier by increasing some neurotransmitter levels correlated with improved mood. Another option is a dawn simulator, which is an electronic device that gradually raises its full-spectrum light intensity to help stimulate you to wake up. This can replace other alarms and provide an easier transition in the mornings, while also stimulating mood and overall health.



Ways to Help the Winter Blues

Eve Giraud-Prosser post-adoption specialist

Aromatherapy can be beneficial to use. This is a simple and safe way that may help with the symptoms of depression by using scents to help regulate mood. Sticking to a daily routine can add stability and a feeling of calmness, by providing reasonable expectations of what to expect in a day. Planning family activities can help everyone stay active while maintaining a routine.

Eating a consistent, well-balanced diet can provide benefits, especially when supplying foods containing vitamin D and other nutrients. Some examples include orange juice or milk fortified with Vitamin D, cod liver oil, salmon, and tuna fish. vitamin D supplements may also provide benefits. Staying hydrated throughout the day is important to diet and overall health, including helping with skin issues that may arise in the winter months.

Talking to a trusted friend or counselor to express your feelings could help to get the negative feelings out. Writing in personal journal, drawing pictures, or other forms of creativity can help with processing heavy emotions.



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!



TRAUMA- INFORMED CAREGIVING

Chris Foreman, MSSW, a liaison for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network will be discussing trauma-informed caregiving. Please join us for a preview of what is coming for the Foster, Adoptive, Kinship conference scheduled for **April 29th.**

When: March 16

Where: Virtually via zoom

Time: 7 pm(ET)

Please RSVP to Donna Burns via email at
dburns@greatlakesrecovery.org or
call/text 920-517-8733

or

Alysa Sutinen via email at alysa@upkids.com
or call/text 906-250-0393