



POST-ADOPTION RESOURCE CENTER NEWSLETTER

✱ Volume 7, Issue 4 ✱

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Caregiver Connection Support Group and Parent Chat

Adoptive, foster, kinship, guardianship parents and respite caregivers: please join us for a support group to connect with others and share experiences. This group will offer insight, support and a sense of community. SUPPORT GROUPS AND EVENTS ARE HELD IN COLLABORATION WITH MDHHS.

Second Tuesday of each month.

7 p.m. EST

Virtually on Teams

Meeting ID: 210 005 769 282

Passcode: f43cY9AC

For more information and/or to RSVP, contact:

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

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Check out upcoming events, webinars and resources on our Facebook page:
U.P. Post Adoption Resource Center
<https://www.facebook.com/906PARC>

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT): A Tool to Help Heal

Beth Mulligan, post-adoption specialist

What is EFT Tapping?

EFT is a mind-body healing practice that combines gentle tapping on acupuncture points with focused attention on emotions or memories. For childhood trauma, tapping can be especially supportive because it can help calm the nervous system while processing difficult feelings, which is something many people didn't have the safety or support to do as children.

How does it work?

EFT works by maintaining your mental focus on a specific issue like anxiety or a traumatic memory while gently tapping on a sequence of acupressure points on your face and upper body with your fingertips. This process often begins with stating the problem and then moving into statements that heal and promote self-acceptance.



How to Do EFT Tapping

- Identify the problem you want to focus on.
- Consider how you are feeling before starting or rate the intensity of the issue.
- Create a setup statement that acknowledges whatever is bothering you followed by a statement of self-acceptance. Repeat this setup statement three times while tapping on the side of your hand.
- Continue the EFT tapping sequence by tapping on the other meridian points: Eyebrow, side of eye, under the eye, under the nose, under the mouth, collarbone, under the arm, and top of the head. Tap about 5-7 times on each point while stating how you feel, first addressing the negative and then move towards introducing the positive statements in the final round of tapping.
- Assess how you feel now and rate the intensity.
- If the intensity of your feelings is still higher than you would like, then keep tapping!

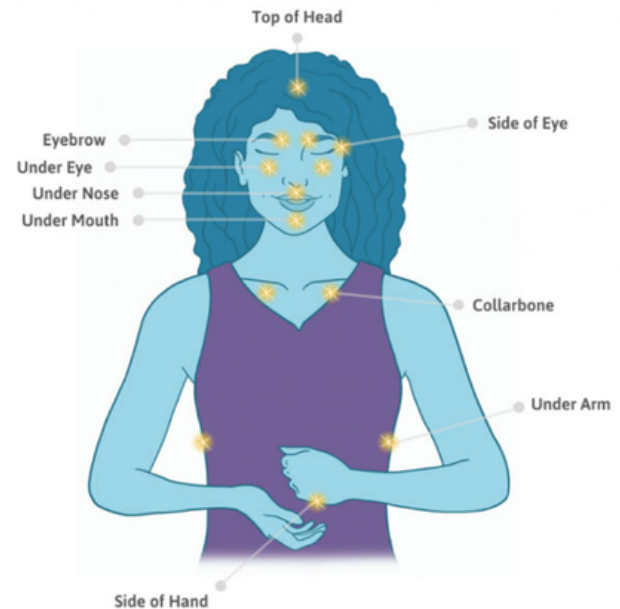
Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT): A Tool to Help Heal , continued

Beth Mulligan, post-adoption specialist

Here are some ways tapping can help reduce the impact of trauma:

1. Calms the Body's Stress Response

Childhood trauma often leaves the nervous system in a heightened state of alertness. Tapping sends calming signals to the brain, especially the amygdala (the part of our brain responsible for fear and stress). These calming signals that tapping creates helps the body shift out of “fight, flight, or freeze” and into a state where healing becomes possible. By tapping on the meridian points while speaking emotionally true statements, it's possible to lower cortisol and deactivate the amygdala.



2. Makes Processing Old Memories Feel Safer

Tapping can help reduce emotional intensity in the moment, allowing people to revisit difficult childhood memories without becoming overwhelmed. It doesn't erase memory, but it can soften the emotional charge, so it no longer feels threatening.

3. Can Help Release Old Beliefs Formed in Childhood

Children often internalize trauma as self-blame, leading to beliefs like 'I'm not safe', 'I'm not lovable', or 'something is wrong with me'. Tapping may help gently surface these beliefs and gradually unwind them, creating space for healthier, more compassionate self perceptions and self-talk. The automatic stress response can be shifted out of unhelpful patterns and strengthen new, healthier habits.

4. Supports the Body in Feeling Safe Again

Childhood trauma is stored not only in memory but also in the way the body stores tension, keeps hypervigilance, and emotional reactivity. Tapping helps regulate the body's stress response, making it easier to feel grounded, connected, and safe in the present moment. EFT can help release stuck emotional memories stored in the body.

EFT Tapping can offer a holistic approach to healing that can get to the root of a variety of physical or mental health issues. EFT Tapping may help people heal from childhood trauma

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT): A Tool to Help Heal , continued

Beth Mulligan, post-adoption specialist

by calming the nervous system, making emotional processing safer, and gently undoing old beliefs that formed during painful experiences. It can be a compassionate, body-based tool that supports emotional regulation, resilience, and long-term healing.

For more information on EFT Tapping visit TheTappingSolution.com. For resources to help your children learn about tapping, check out the Tapping Solution Foundation YouTube channel where you will find Tapping for Kids with Allison – What is Tapping? Additional free resources can be found on YouTube with the following guides: Brad Yates, Dr. Adriana Popescu, or Julie Shiffman. Happy Tapping!

Sample Script from The Tapping Solution Kids' Confidence Card Deck

I Am Enough, Just As I Am

Tap on each point as you speak:

Side of Hand: "Even when I doubt myself, I am still enough."

Eyebrow: "I don't need to prove anything."

Side of Eye: "I just need to remember."

Under Eye: "I am enough."

Under Nose: "I'm not too much or too little."

Chin: "I am perfectly me."

Collarbone: "It feels good to be myself."

Under Arm: "I am enough."

Top of Head: "Just as I am."

When Spiraling & Feeling Stuck

Repeat this quick tap for 1-2 minutes on your collarbone:

"I am safe right now. One step is enough. I release the panic. I choose positive action."

References:

The Tapping Solution. "Tapping for Trauma: A Comprehensive Guide to EFT Techniques for Healing Trauma and PTSD."

Tap Into Your Best Self. "EFT for Childhood Trauma: Rewire Patterns and Beliefs."

The Tapping Solution. "What is EFT tapping? Beginner's guide to emotional freedom technique."



Praising Children and Their Behavior

Tylor Kistler, post-adoption specialist

It is important that we praise children and their behavior because, when we do, children develop their sense of self-worth and positive self-esteem is increased. Children with positive self-worth tend to do better in school, are able to persevere through difficult situations, make more friends, and generally lead more productive lives (Source nurturing parenting; Gunderson et al., 2018). Outside of the concrete outcomes such as improved grades, children that are praised often and honestly tend to think more positive thoughts about themselves and are generally happier children as a result.

There are two ways to offer praise as a parenting practice: praise for being and praise for doing.

Praise for being tells children that, just because they exist as human beings and as our children, they are valued and worthy of love. This form of praise demonstrates that our children are cherished just as they are and love is unconditional, regardless of circumstance or behavior. Examples of praise for being include statements such as “I love you” or “I am so happy you are my child” or “you are such a special person”. In this case, children do not need to do anything to earn the praise. The praise is given for simply existing as a person in the world (Bavolek & Dellinger-Bavolek, 2009).

Praise for doing includes recognizing a child's effort and accomplishments. Children love to receive praise from the adults in their lives. When they are praised for doing something, it typically brings a happiness that they have pleased someone else. Praising a child for their efforts and/or behaviors do not have to require a child doing something correctly or successfully, but for all tasks that they gave their best effort for. When children are praised for trying and failing, they are much more likely to try again and persevere through difficult situations. Examples of praise for doing include statements such as “I am so happy to see you try so hard” or “I am proud that you listened to directions” or “Wow! You are doing so well in school” (Bavolek & Dellinger-Bavolek, 2009).

While praising a child is significantly tied to their self-worth and success, it is possible to use praise incorrectly and create an opposite effect (Bavolek & Dellinger-Bavolek, 2009). Praise for being and praise for doing should never be used together. For example, statements such as “you did a great job cleaning your room. You are such a good girl” or “I love you so much for listening to my directions”. Combining praise for being and doing can unknowingly tell a child that they only have worth if they do something that warrants praise: that love is conditional and their worth is directly tied to their accomplishments (which is far from true! All people have worth no matter their success).



Praising Children and Their Behavior, continued

Taylor Kistler, post-adoption specialist

The 5:1 Rule

A wealth of research indicates that, when we praise our children, we must consider the level of praise in comparison to the level of criticism and negative interactions we have with our children. Research states that children thrive when interactions with trusted adults are warm, encouraging, and connection driven more than they are based in criticism or punishment (Chen et al., 2019). Specifically, research suggests that children need to be praised or experience a positive interaction at least five times (and ideally ten times) for every negative interaction or criticism (Flora, 2000; Fredrickson & Losada 2005; Sabey et al., 2018).



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- Gunderson EA, Sorhagen NS, Gripshover SJ, Dweck CS, Goldin-Meadow S, Levine SC. 2018. Parent praise to toddlers predicts fourth grade academic achievement via children's incremental mindsets. *Dev Psychol.* 54(3):397-409
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- Fredrickson, B. L., & Losada, M. F. (2005). Positive Affect and the Complex Dynamics of Human Flourishing. *American Psychologist*, 60(7), 678-686. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.60.7.678>
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Mastery and Control

Lauren Meadors, post-adoption specialist

Mastery and control are two important and beneficial skills to have in life. They help us navigate and influence the world around us. Mastery is defined as, "A proficiency, command or grasp of a subject, skill or knowledge base." While control can be described by, "The power to influence or direct people's behaviors or the course of events." We all have different levels of control and mastery in our lives depending on factors such as: our developmental stage in life, relationships, skill sets, environments and experiences. Having a good sense of mastery and control can look like someone who is confident as they move through life's challenges and feels comfortable seeking out things that they set their minds to. While someone who is still working on developing these concepts might appear to be stuck in place or withdrawn due to feelings of powerlessness and fear.

Children who have adoption or guardianship in their stories can experience roadblocks to the development of these skills. Disruptions in a child's permanency and attachment can contribute to feelings of having little control over one's life. In many adoption and guardianship experiences, the child is unable to consent to shifts in their lives, creating feelings of helplessness. Signs that youth are struggling to build mastery and control can include a withdrawn or uninterested attitude towards relationships, a passive attitude to

Mastery and Control, continued
Lauren Meadors, post-adoption specialist

the environment or events around them, and aggression that attempts to gain back some control. These can also act as attempts to shield oneself from the potential for future emotional pain. Youth who have experienced repeated loss may need extra support to build up senses of mastery and control.

There are four steps to consider when working towards mastery. First comes self-awareness, the process of coming back to oneself and finding your true passions and motivations. It looks like connecting with all parts of your story, both the good and the bad, to be fully present with yourself. Through this process, it becomes easier to make decisions about what you do and don't want out of life and how to move forward with your future. To quote Allison Davis Maxon & Sharon Kaplan Roszia, "When we reconnect with our authentic self, we have the choice of continuing on our current path or choosing a different path." The second step is to begin gaining knowledge. Whether the knowledge you need relates to healing past experiences or learning how to achieve your goals, collecting information is a crucial step and helps with decision making and action taking. The more knowledge you equip yourself with, the better prepared you may be. Next comes plenty of practice. This step can cause one to become stuck or decide to give up as it requires patience, repetition and making mistakes. Believing in the power of baby steps and resilience can make a big impact here. Finally, once you have worked your way through self-awareness, gaining knowledge and practice, mastery is on the horizon. Mastery includes utilization of all three previous steps and putting your new skills to work.



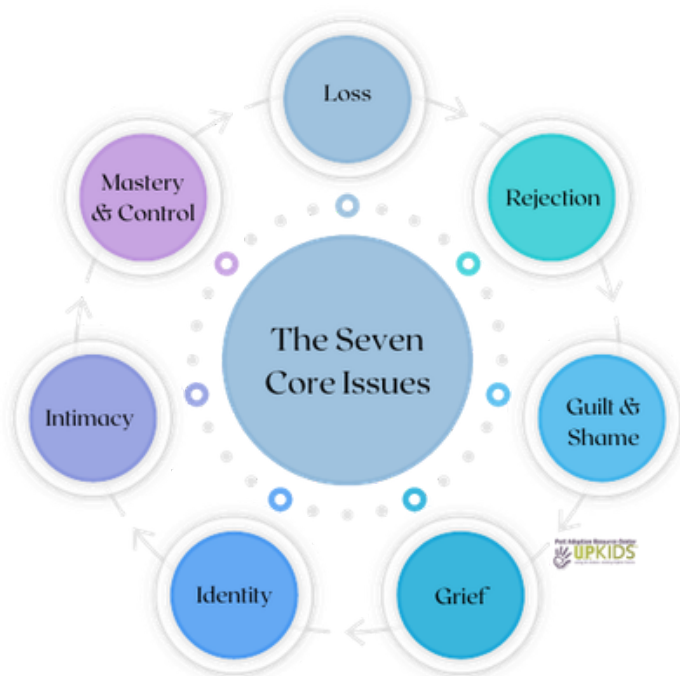
Mastery and Control, continued

Lauren Meadors, post-adoption specialist

There are many tools that Maxon and Roszia recommend in their book *Seven Core Issues in Adoption and Permanency* to help families build mastery and control. One way the authors suggest you can help improve mastery is to write down your top five beliefs about life. Following this, go through the list and ask yourself: are these beliefs true? Have you ever challenged any of these beliefs? Have you ever changed previous beliefs and if so, why? How do these beliefs make you feel? Lastly, who would you be without your beliefs? This thought experiment can help bring you a little closer to yourself and your view of the world.

The authors also give tools for helping children in building their mastery, an impactful one is the use of limited choices. When parenting, try incorporating more choices for your child to make. For example, picking between two breakfast options or whether they would prefer to spend time reading or playing before bedtime. Giving them options to choose from keeps the guardian in the driver's seat while also allowing the child to build experience and confidence in making decisions for themselves and feeling in control of their actions. A more rounded sense of mastery and control can help both you and those in your care make more informed and positively motivated decisions about the direction of your futures.

Kaplan Roszia, Sharon, and Allison Davis Maxon. *Seven Core Issues in Adoption and Permanency*. Jessica Kingsley Publisher, 2019.



Paper Chain of Strengths (Loss & Resilience)

The Paper Chain of Strengths activity helps children and families build resilience by recognizing personal strengths, sharing positive memories and expressing hope for the future. As family members create a paper chain together, they strengthen relationships, affirm each person's value and reinforce resilience while gently supporting themes related to loss, identity, grief and trust through shared, positive experiences.

Supplies:

Colored paper strips
Tape or glue
Markers

Directions:

Each family member writes one strength, positive memory or hope on each strip. Connect the strips into one long paper chain.

Examples:

I am brave.
We laugh together.
I keep trying.
I can ask for help.



We are here for you!

Let us know how we can help.

What training topics interest you?

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

How can we help you through our support groups?

Do you have ideas or suggestions?

Contact us through email, phone or our Facebook page.

