

The Adoption Triad...

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ADOPTION ARC

Nice to meet you...

- Laura E Hoffman, MSW, LCSW
- Graduated from Temple University with an MSW in 1994.
- Washington, DC (LCSW) – Child Welfare
- Philadelphia, PA (LCSW) – Private Practice
- Cherry Hill, NJ (LCSW) – Adoption ARC and Private Practice.
- Supervises new MSW graduates.

Most importantly; Mama to Benji.



ADOPTEE

THE
*Adoption
Triad*

Birth Family

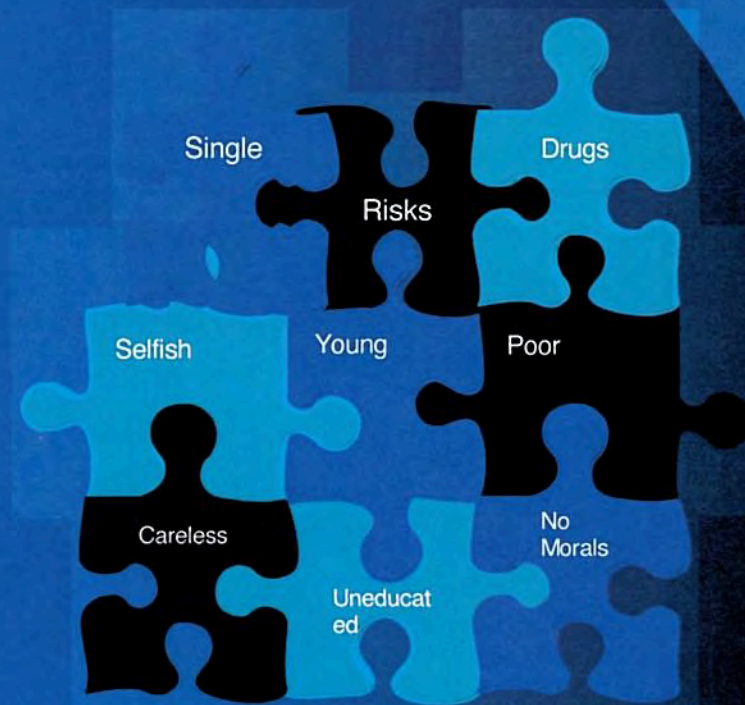
Adoptive Family

Introduction...

- What is the Adoption Triad?
- Why is it important to focus on the welfare of the triad in its entirety?
- What does open adoption mean?
- Why is open adoption an important option for Birth Mothers, Adoptive Parents and Adoptees?

Myths about Birth Mothers...

Society has not always been kind to Birth Mothers.



Benefits of a Healthy Triad.

- First and foremost, all parties are being treated with dignity and respect.
- The Adoptee will know that their Birth Mother had the support that she deserved and needed; such as options counseling, supportive counseling and resources to live and thrive during the pregnancy.
- The Adoptee will know that their adoption was an informed choice.

Benefits of a Healthy Triad (2)

- The Adoptive Parents will not struggle with feeling entitled to parent due to not knowing if Birth Mother was fully informed regarding the adoption.
- The Adoptive Parents will benefit from being able to contribute to Birth Mother's stability during the pregnancy.
- The Adoptive Parents can understand their child through a broader lense.

Benefits to a Healthy Triad (3)

- Birth Mother feels empowered through the process.
- Birth Mother is an active participant instead of a victim of circumstance.
- Birth Mother is able to “create a plan” as opposed to “give up” her child. In turn, healing and grieving are dealt with in a different manner.

Who is she?

- A Birth Mother is someone who wants a better life for her child.
- A Birth Mother usually thinks long and hard about her choice to create an adoption plan.
- A Birth Mother is involved in choosing the Adoptive Family for her baby.
- A Birth Mother has ongoing updates regarding her baby's life.

Birth Mothers' needs:

- Grief never ends, it morphs, therefore, lifetime counseling for Birth Mothers is essential.
- Grief looks different for different people.
- Each Birth Mother has her own story.
- Don't make assumptions.

The Legal Part...

- Adoption Laws vary state to state.
- New Jersey – must wait 72 hours until legal surrenders are signed. Then the legal surrenders are full, final and irrevocable.
- What does this mean for the Birth Mother?
- What she needs before anything legal is signed?
- The post placement process in New Jersey.

Adoptive Parents – Needs and Wants

What is their journey?

Are they childless not by choice?

- Possible infertility, grief and loss.
- Have they healed?
- The importance of healing in order to move forward.
- Home Studies, Clearances and More!

Building an Authentic Dynamic

- A forever connection; Birth Mothers, Adoptive Parents and Adoptees; how to establish an authentic, boundaried relationship.
- Making adoption a positive, non shaming situation.
- What happens to Birth Mothers, and how do they cope?

Parenting Goal: To establish a secure attachment

- Stable.
- No disruption.
- Trust develops.
- Empathic reflection.
- Exploration is encouraged and caregivers remain grounded.

How Adoption Impacts Children...

- Changes in time have made adoption a less shaming issue, but there is more work to do!
- Positive Adoption Language.
- Positive approach to transracial adoption.
- Openness helps eliminate children creating “real parent fantasies.”
- Not putting too much responsibility on the child

Attachment and Bonding

- What age is the child when adopted?
- Infant Adoption –
- Let's look at Attachment Theory –
- British psychologist and psychiatrist, John Bowlby (late 1940s was commissioned by WHO to research psychological connectedness.)

4 Facets of Attachment Theory

- 1. Safe Haven – the baby has comfort in time of threat by caregiver.
- 2. Secure Base – the baby assumes a reliable foundation with the care giver.
- 3. Proximity Maintenance – the child explores the world, but stays close to the caregiver.
- 4. Separation Distress – the child is unhappy when separated from the caregiver.

Attachment to Caretakers

- Bowlby believed that the child's attachment was built over the first year of life as the child forms a representational mental model of self and others based on its earliest relationship to its caretaker.

Developmental Milestones

- Babies spend different amounts of time at each stage before moving to the next stage.
- Motor
- Language
- Social/Emotional
- Depends upon where the baby is and how stimulated and nurtured they are.

Infant Attachment

- 1-3 months babies become more active and aware. Recognize familiar voices and vision changes.
- 4-7 months babies are interested in the human face and strong attachments to primary caretakers are solidified.
- Babies are showing displeasure when away from their primary caretaker.

My Child's Adoption Story

- Start sharing their adoption story on day one.
- Be honest, but age appropriate.
- Use available resources, including other Adoptive Families.
- Let your child manage their adoption story.
- Get comfortable with teaching your child how to manage uncertainty.

Questions, Comment or Thoughts

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