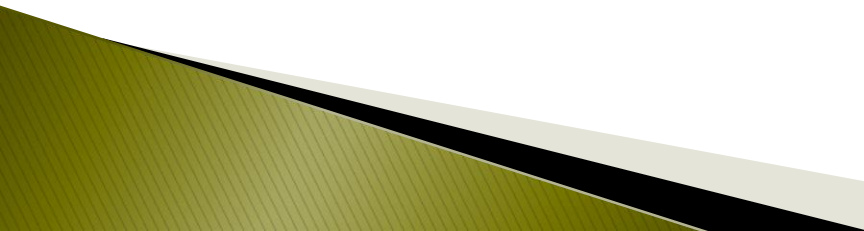


How the Adults in Adoption Impact the Experience of the Children and Themselves

Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao
CBH Knowledge Center
April 5th, 2016



The Systems Therapist/Professional enters the system, becoming a participating member and thus able to bring about Change *FROM WITHIN*.





- ▶ A Family Crisis may be the optimal time for establishing the foundation for therapeutically indicated *Change*.
- ▶ Disequilibrium, or deconstruction, allows for equilibrium or restructuring.

The therapist/professional is part of—not separate from—the context of the treatment and is, therefore, part of the diagnosis.

This produces Change.



- ▶ The family must gain something from the *immediate encounter* in order know what the systemic therapeutic experience will be like.



Systems orientation, work, or therapy deals with:

- ▶ Behavior (acts, actions)
- ▶ Relationships (between/among people, events, things)
- ▶ Patterns and Sequences
- ▶ Systems and Subsystems
- ▶ Structures



By offering an intervention labeled 'evaluation' rather than 'treatment': network members may be more open to seeing resources in themselves.

Systemic Training

In order to be adoption competent, it is important for trainees to be able to understand and enact the methods used in systemic work.



How?

- ▶ Sitting in on therapy and consultation.
- ▶ Work behind a one way mirror or videotape sessions.
- ▶ A team approach.
- ▶ Examining Transference/Countertransference
- ▶ Examining Operating Belief Systems



Concurrent training and supervision in an ongoing fashion is essential to good practice and to adoption competence.



We are looking for Master therapists: Competent in Systems, Trauma, Cultural Competency, and Adoption

Mastery: the realization or full command over the tools of one's trade is, or ought to be, every professional/therapist's goal.



How Many Families/Adults Does It Take To Make An Adoption?

Two?

Four?

Six?

Eight?

How Many Families?

How Many Adults?



A more complete perspective of 'adoption'...what we mean be 'complex blended families'

Root families are families where the mother and father who gave birth to the child are also parenting the child together...

Complex families are every other type of family structure...

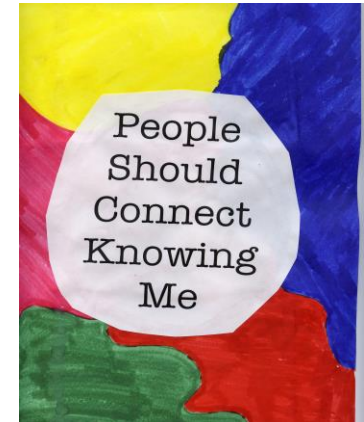
Complex blended families are a blending of many families by adoption, fostering, kinship care, remarriage, or alternative reproductive technologies.

What adoption is not...

- It is **not** a problem, or an illness, or a ‘bad thing’, although it most often stems from what people consider problems--such as an untimely pregnancy, inability to parent at that time, domestic violence or addictions, infertility--in all but ancient pacific rim cultures, or in present day pre-planned and pre-arranged situations.
- Society tends to view adoption as a ‘problem’ even though this is **not** true of, or to, the people involved, such as birth parents, adoptive parents, and adopted people (also foster families, kinship families, families by alternative reproductive technologies and families by remarriage).
- It is **not** an incident or an event.
- It is **not** the legal moment of a signing of a document, of surrender of parental rights, or of the signing of an adoption agreement.
- ***Remember: Pathologizing Leads to Pathology.***

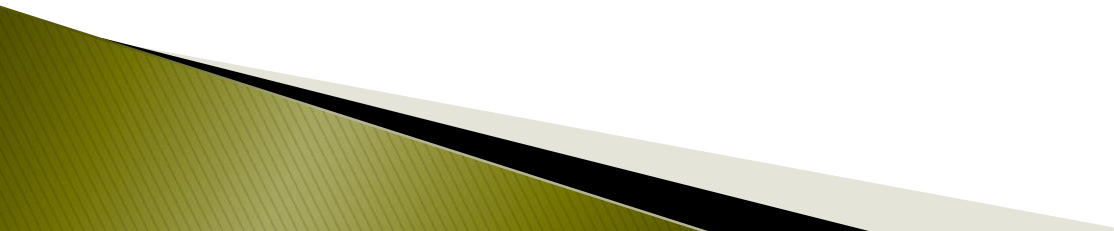
What adoption is...

- Adoption is the taking on and extending, or making of family, by admitting others to the clan...and claiming them as relatives, as in marriage.
- It is a lifelong process and it affects the generations before, and after, in many direct and indirect ways for both birth and adoptive families.
- Adoption is complex; it is never simple.
- Complex is sometimes seen as 'negative'.



"A child born to another woman calls me mom. The depth of the tragedy and the magnitude of the privilege are not lost on me." Jody Landers

What are Pre and Post Adoption Services?

- Who should provide them?
 - What should the training be for the professionals who provide these services?
 - Who should receive these services?
- 

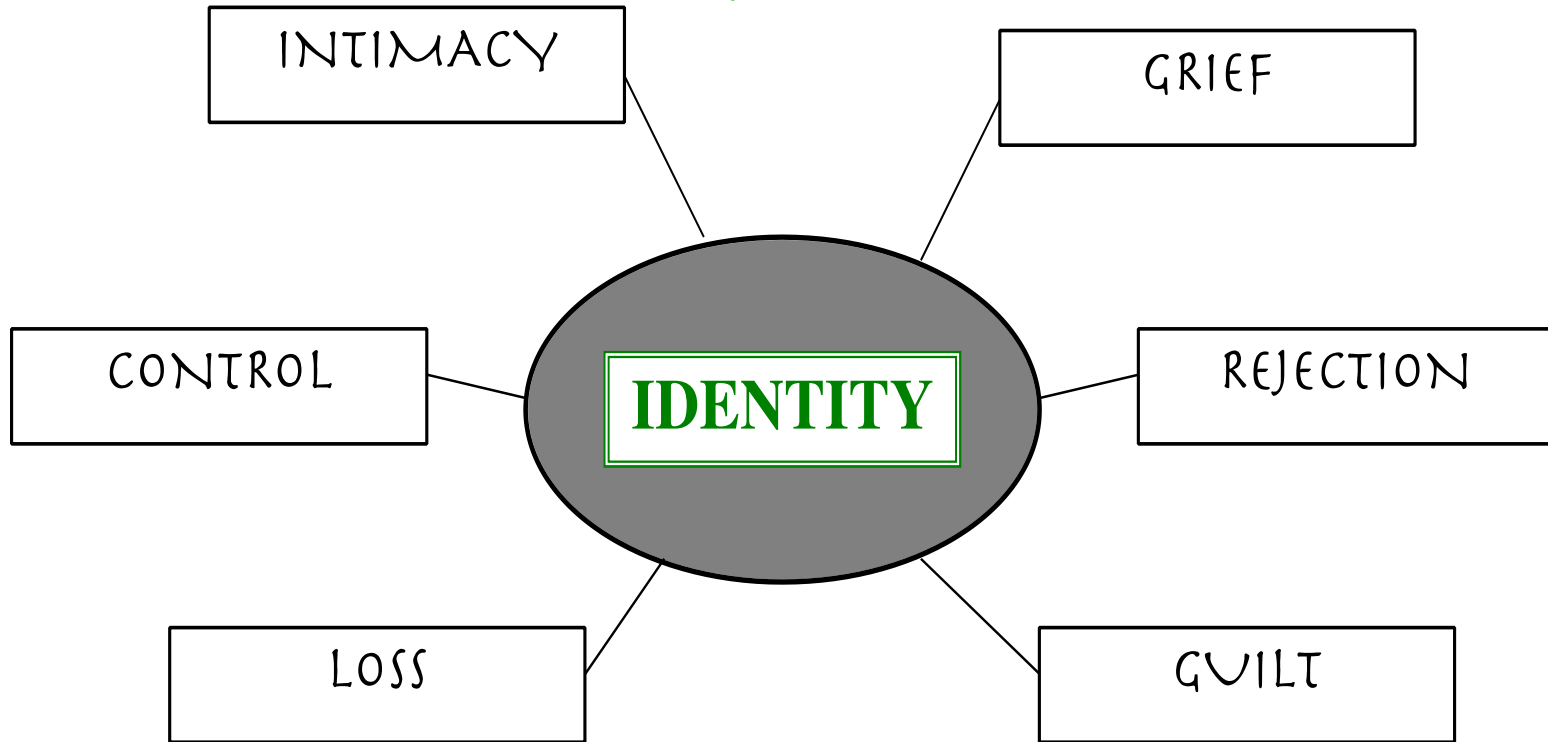
Talking to adults and professionals about adoption...

- Adoption is of many varieties... most often people know of only one kind of adoption and feel that they know all about adoption because of their own personal knowledge or connection. What is ethical practice pre adoption for pregnant women and their partners, women (and men) who's children have been removed, and agencies that assist with ART
- Laws and policies are usually made for one form of adoption, and may exclude and overlook the needs of another form.
- Adoption can be closed, or open. **(ethics around this post adoption and beyond)**
- Even these words (open and closed) mean different things to different people! Is it ethical to keep vital information about someone from that person?



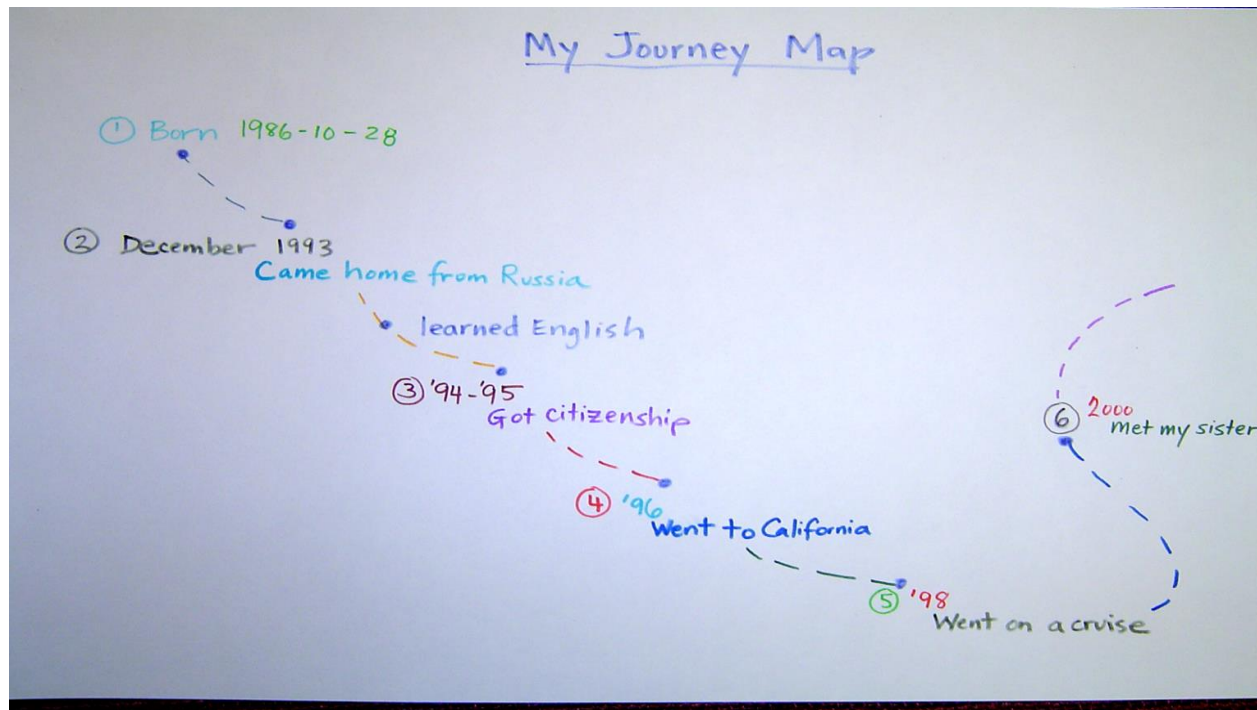
The 7 Core Issues of Adoption

Kaplan and Silverstein



How do you talk about adoption?

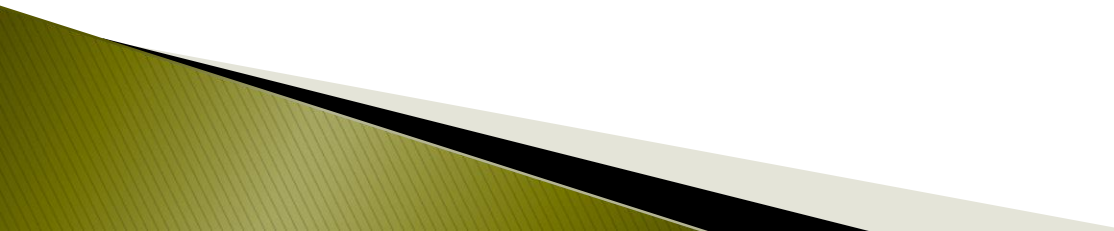
Find ways to facilitate discussion:
Examples of work with individuals



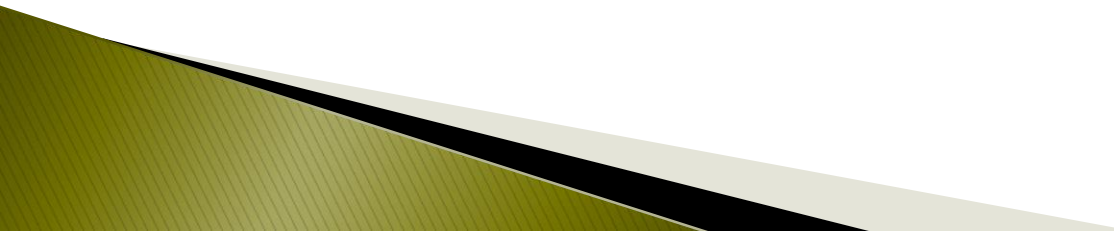
The Adoptee

7 Core issues for the adoptee

Loss

- Fear ultimate abandonment
 - Loss of biological, genetic, cultural, and history
 - Issues of holding on and letting go
- 

Rejection

- Personalize placement for adoption as rejection
 - Issues of self-esteem
 - Can only be chosen if first rejected
 - Anticipate rejection
 - Misperceive situations
- 

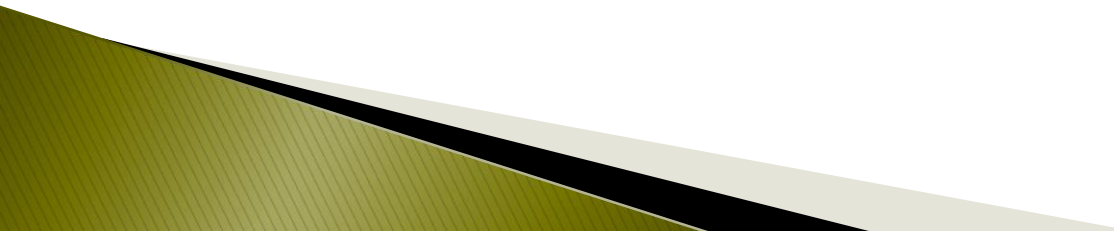
Guilt/Shame

- Deserving misfortune
- Shame of being different
- May take defensive stance/anger

Grief

- Grief may be overlooked in childhood, blocked by adult, leading to depression/acting out
- May grieve lack of “fit” in adoptive family

Identity

- Deficits in information may impede integration of identity
 - May see search for identity in early pregnancies
 - Extreme behaviors in order to create sense of belonging
- 

Intimacy

- Fear getting close and risk reenacting earlier losses
- Concerns over possible incest
- Bonding issues may lower capacity for intimacy

Control

- Adoption alters life course
- Not party to initial decisions
- Haphazard nature of adoption removes cause and effect continuum

Birth Family/ First Family

7 core issues for birth parents

LOSS

- Ruminates about lost child.
- Initial loss merges with other life events; leads to social isolation
- Changes in body and self image
- Relationship losses

Losses

Sometimes people see only the positive aspects of adoption (and there are many), and think that love alone can conquer any negatives that might be there. They are, then, surprised when there are behavioral problems or stresses. It's important to remember that in any adoption, there are some losses:

The adoptee may have lost:

- genetic, medical, cultural history
- birthparents and extended birth family
- siblings
- religion
- family traditions
- sense of being in a traditional family
- self-esteem

The birthparent(s) may have lost:

- the child itself
- the pleasure of raising the child
- status of motherhood
- knowledge of child's future, any grandchildren
- approval

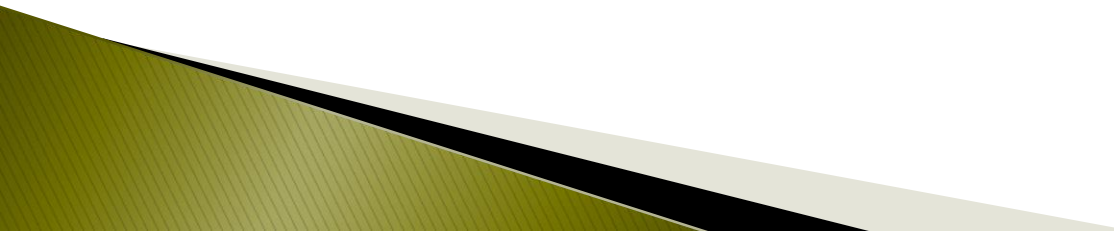
The adoptive parent(s) may have lost:

- sense of reproductive control
- privacy
- identity and self-esteem
- the fantasy of the child they thought they'd have
- sense of making a genetic contribution to their child
- knowledge of the child's first days, months, years
- knowledge of the child's family history
- status as a "normal" family
- the myth that love is enough

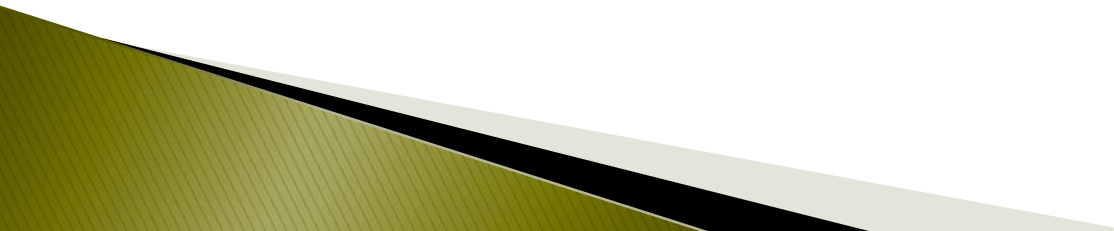
Awareness of these potential losses makes it possible to have a healthier outcome in any adoptive situation.

With thanks to the newsletter of CPFAC (Colorado Parents for all Children) for the basic idea and some of the details.

Rejection

- Rejects self as irresponsible, unworthy because permitted adoption
 - Turn these feelings against self as deserving rejection
 - Come to expect and cause rejection
- 

Guilt/Shame

- Party to guilty secret
 - Shame/guilt for placing child
 - Judged by others
 - Double bind: not ok to keep child, and not ok to relinquish
- 

Grief

- Grief acceptable only short period of time
- But may be delayed 10–15 years
- Lack rituals for mourning
- Sense of shame blocks grief work

Identity

- Child is part of identity goes on without knowledge
- Diminished sense of self and self worth
- May interfere with future intimate relationships and parental desires

Intimacy

- Difficultly resolving issues with other birth parent may interfere with future relationships
- Intimacy may equate with loss

Control

- Relinquishment seen as out of control disjunctive event
- Interrupts drive for self actualization

Adoptive Family



Extended Adoptive Family

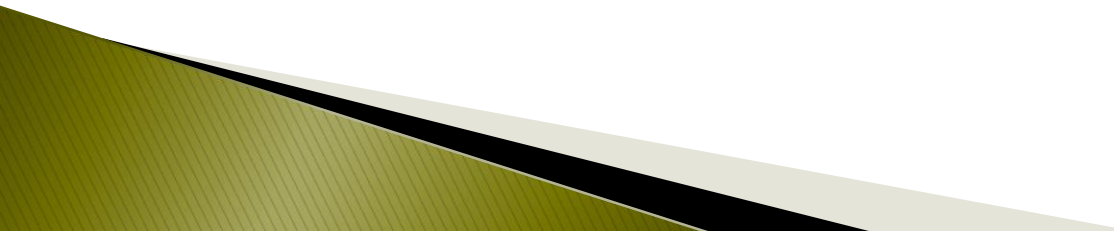
Adoptive Family 7 Core Issues



Loss

- Infertility equated with loss of self and immortality
- Issues of entitlement lead to fear of loss of child and overprotection.

Rejection

- Ostracized because of procreation difficulties
 - May scapegoat partner
 - Expect rejection
 - May expel adoptee to avoid anticipated rejection
- 

Guilt/Shame

- Shame of infertility

- May believe childlessness is curse or punishment; religious crisis

Grief

- Must grieve loss of “fantasy” child
- Unresolved grief may block attachment to adoptee
- May experience adoptee’s grief as rejection

Identity

- Experience diminished sense of continuity of self
- Are not parents

Intimacy

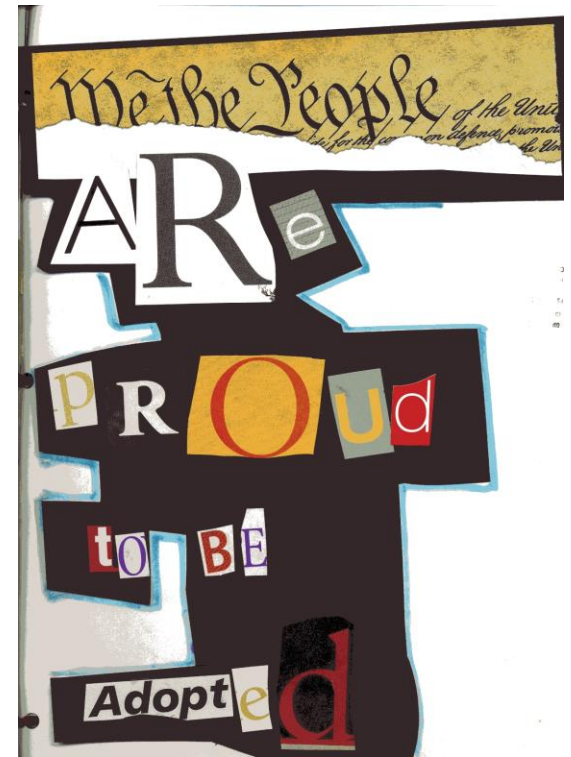
- Unresolved grief over losses may lead to intimacy/marital problems
- May avoid closeness with adoptee to avoid loss.

Control

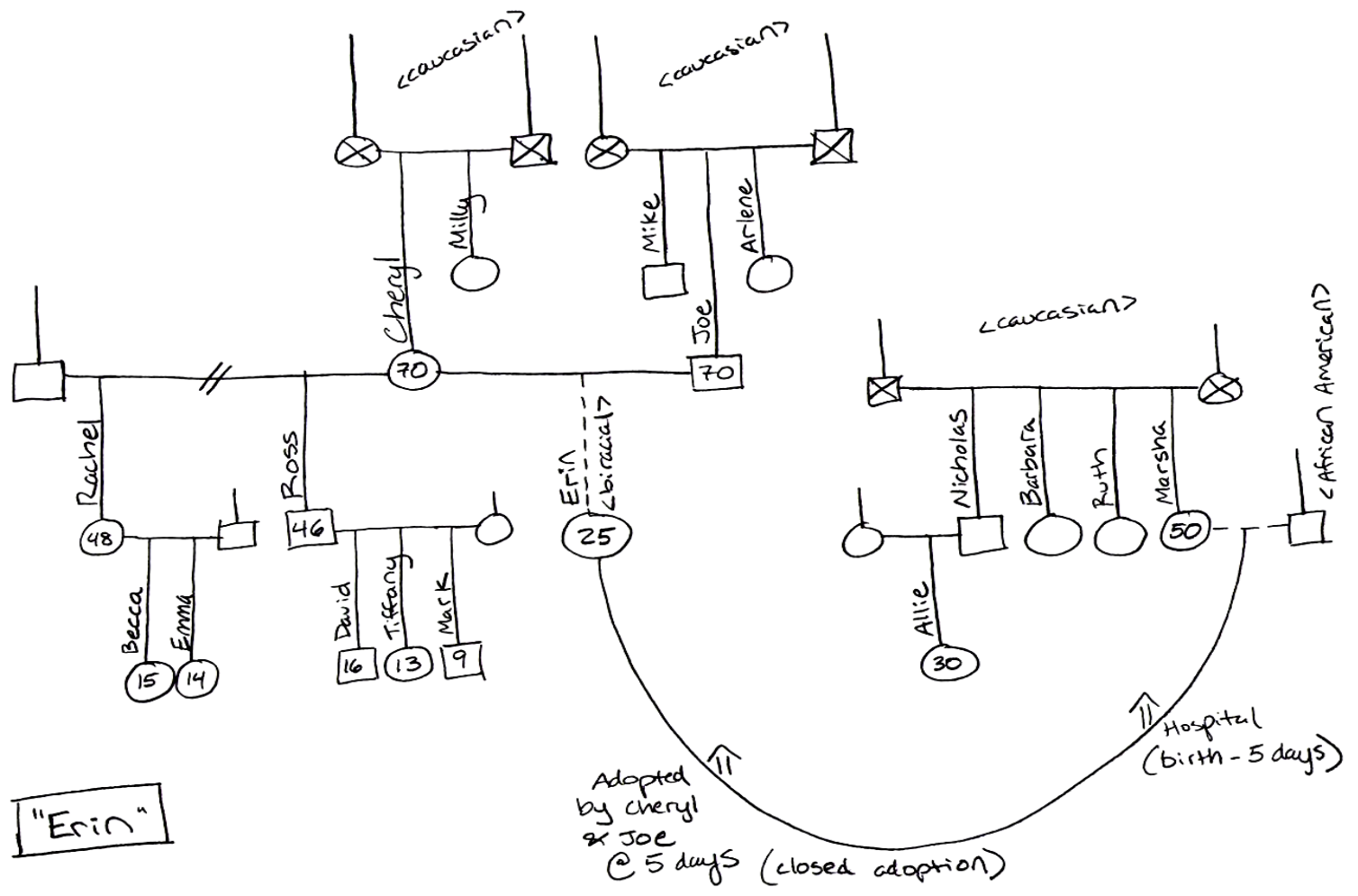
- Adoption experiences lead to “learned helplessness” sense mastery linked to procreation

Use of Genogram

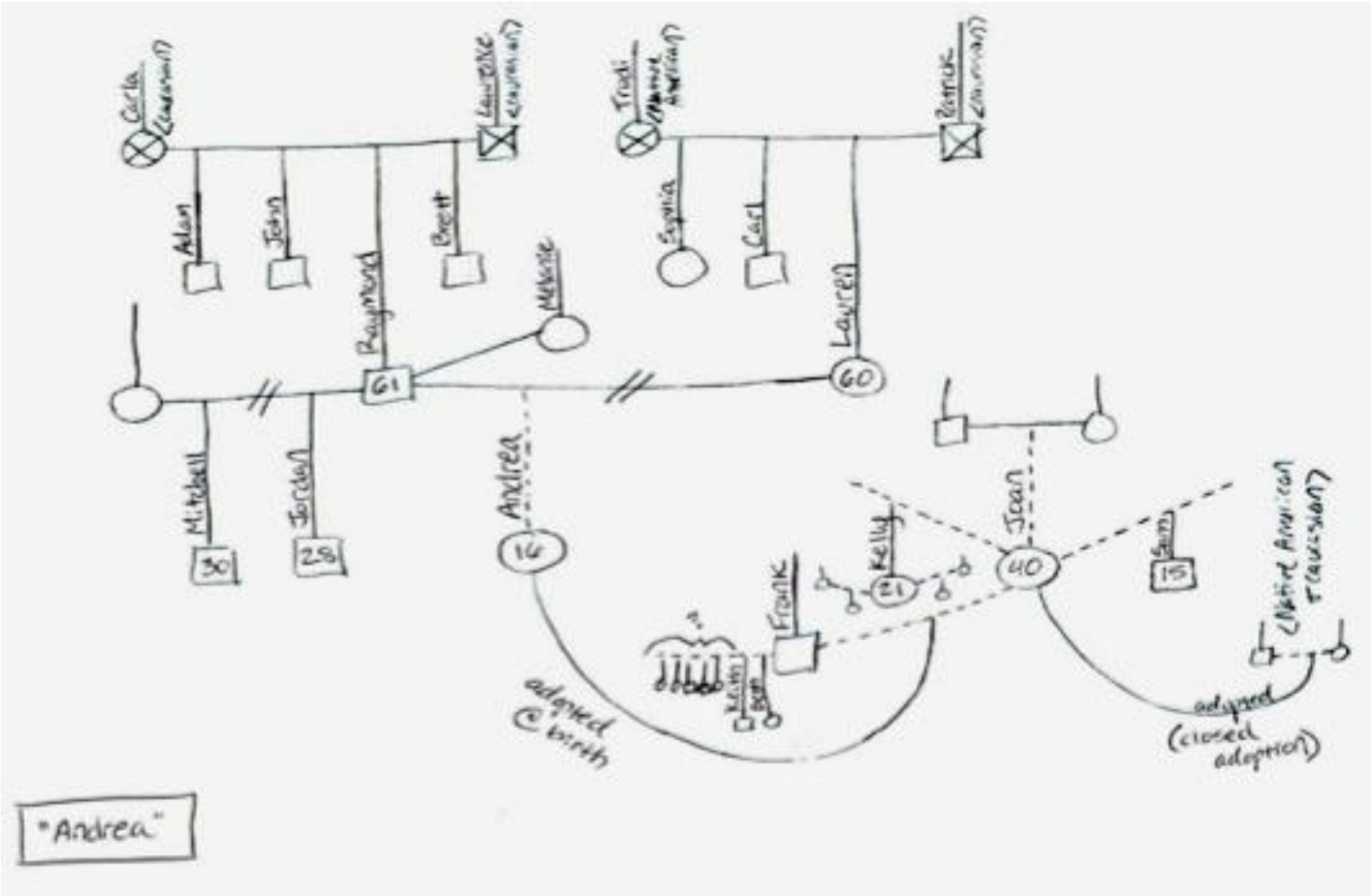
- Families
- Families in law
- Families connected
- Countries and Cultures
- Race and Religion



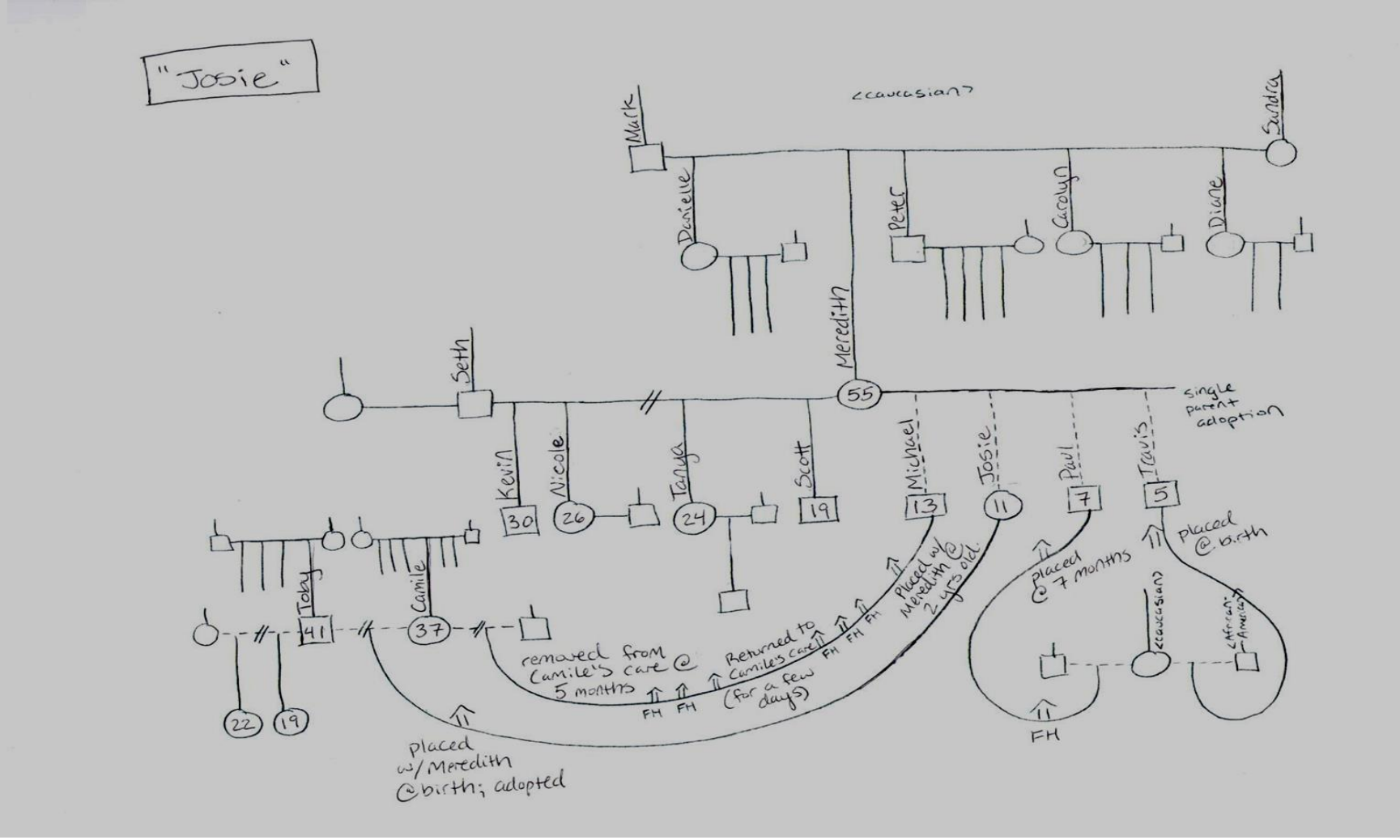
Example Genogram



Example Genogram

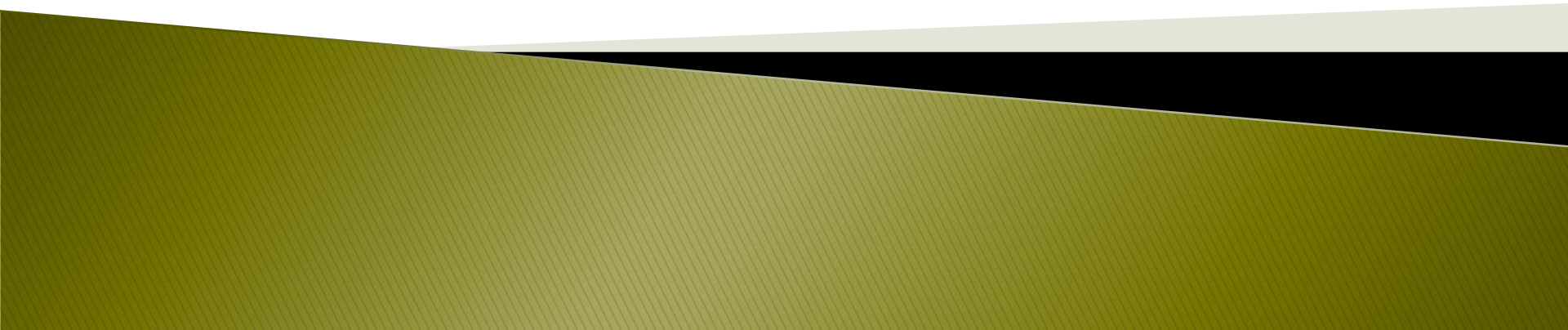


Example Genogram



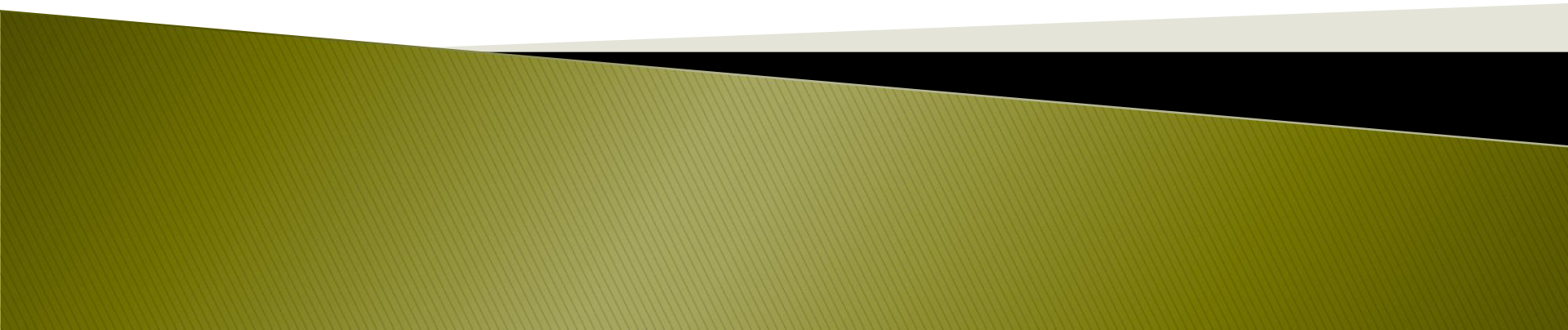
Outline of Post Adoption Services

Pavao/PACT Model*

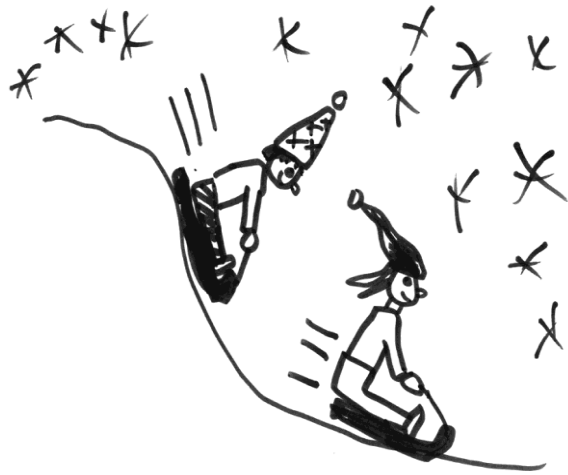


The Professional

A Help or A Hindrance...



Family Crisis = Change



Strength-Based



Why a Systems Perspective in Adoption and After Adoption



“Evaluation” Often Preferred Over “Treatment”



Are Your Professionals Trained Enough to Work With This Population?



Master Therapists in Adoption and Post Adoption



Inter-Generational Model



The Normative Crises in the Development of the Adoptive Family



Pavao's Brief-Long-Term (BLT) Therapy



Fifty-Thousand Mile Checkups



Family Orchard Model*



“Boarding School” Model



“Talkabouts”*



Clinical Mediation Model



Clinical Visitation Model



Consultation Model



Groups Model



This Model Includes:

- Educational Resources
- Crisis Intervention
- Advocacy
- Supervision and Professional Self-Assessment
- Information and Referrals
- Ongoing Support and Consultation or Therapy to Complex Blended Families**
- Consultation to the Professionals who Serve Them



An evening for Birthfathers

Join us at Center For Family Connections for an evening to meet with other birthfathers, listen to their experiences, and share your own. This is a safe place to talk about what your experience has been like and make some connections.



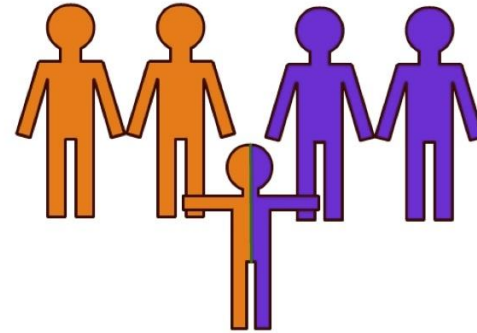
Cost: \$55
Date: Monday May 16th, 2011
Time: 6-7:30pm
Location: Center For Family Connections, Cambridge, MA
Led by Jennifer Eckert, LCSW and Ryan Rivard, Clinical intern

Please register by Thursday May 12th

Mass Health accepted please call regarding the use of other insurance. Partial Scholarships are available.



Center For Family Connections is proud to present a 6-session group for Adult Adoptee's.



When: Tuesday evenings from 6:00pm-7:30pm
May 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st; June 7th & 14th

What: A safe and supportive environment where individuals can share their adoption stories and experiences through discussions, writing and other modes. Sharing is optional.

Cost: \$325 for six sessions led by two clinicians, including refreshments.

Insurance: MBHP (MassHealth) accepted, call regarding other health insurance plans

Led by: Jennifer Eckert, LCSW with Katie Wynen, Clinical Intern

Pre-registration* and pre-payment required (space is limited).
MasterCard and Visa accepted. Registration fee is non-refundable.

*Please register by Friday, May 6th

To register or ask any questions, please contact Center For Family Connections:
350 Cambridge Street • Cambridge, MA 02141 • 617-547-0909
www.kinnect.org • cffc@kinnect.org



Picking Up the Pieces

Raising Children With Difficult Beginnings



Center For Family Connections is proud to offer a 6-session therapeutic group for adoptive and foster parents of children who have experienced trauma, loss and/or difficult beginnings.

- When:** Thursday evenings from 5:30 - 7:00pm
May 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th; June 2nd & 9th
- What:** Six group sessions that will include support with personal experiences; understanding the developmental impact of difficult beginnings; and techniques for responding to difficult behaviors at home. Group size will be kept small to provide a safe space for processing difficult questions.
- Cost:** \$325 for six sessions led by two clinicians, including refreshments.
- Insurance:** MBHP (MassHealth) accepted, call regarding other health insurance plans
- Led by:** Mary D. Gallaudet, LICSW with Suzanne Muldoon, M.A., Clinical Extern

Pre-registration* and pre-payment required (space is limited).
MasterCard and Visa accepted. Registration fee is non-refundable.

*Please register by Monday, April 25th

To register or ask any questions, please contact Center For Family Connections:
350 Cambridge Street • Cambridge, MA 02141 • 617-547-0909
www.kinnect.org • cffc@kinnect.org



Birth Mother's Tea



Monday, May 9, 2011.
6:00pm - 7:30pm

Led by: Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao, LMFT LCSW
Jennifer Eckert, LCSW
Katie Wynen, Clinical Intern

*We hope you will join us for tea, snacks, and
discussion regarding challenges & joys
of being a birth mother.*

No charge for participation. Donations accepted.
Center For Family Connections
350 Cambridge St. Cambridge, MA
Please register before 4/28/2011
617-547-0909, cffc@kinnect.org, www.kinnect.org





Pre/Post Adoption Consulting and Training
Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao
220 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138
617-547-0909
kinnect@gmail.com
www.pavaoconsulting.com

If you are interested in becoming connected to AACT or would like more information,
please don't hesitate to contact us...

eakinnect@gmail.com

617 547 0909

Professional Supervision Trainings -available upon request

In-service Trainings- available upon request

30th Annual ARC Summer Intensives in Provincetown, Cape Cod, MA - July 2016

eakinnect@gmail.com

617 547 0909