



Adoption: A Lifelong Journey

The Third Annual Collaborative Conference
Saturday, March 9, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM in Oakland, CA

Afternoon Session I:

Birth Parents Only: Changing Needs, Changing Strategies

Rm. 203

Brenda Romanchik

Brenda will facilitate a discussion of a birth parent's changing needs immediately following placement through the years that follow. Workshop participants will identify some of the common challenges a birth parent faces, discuss strategies to cope and address how those strategies may change over time. Topics may include how and when to reveal your placement to those close to you, how your relationship with the child will change as he or she matures, and how to build and maintain a healthy support system.

Navigating Adoption When Birth Parents Are Not Involved: Feelings, Relationships, Reunions

Rm. 202

David Brodzinsky & Leslie Foge

Speakers will address common questions such as how parents talk about and how children think about their birth parents when the never had or have lost contact with their children's birth parents. Speakers will address how to support children's curiosity and pain in developmentally appropriate ways when they don't or can't have direct contact with birth parents as well as sharing research about the importance of openness in adoption, as distinct from open

Talking with 0-5 Year Olds about Adoption

Community Room

Anne Brodzinsky

Addressing the unique questions and issues inherent to the experience of being adopted, we will discuss the developmental stages that children go through and how each stage changes their understanding and questions about being adopted. This workshop will include practical suggestions for how to bring up adoption to very young children and specific guidance about handling sensitive or painful issues of adoption.

Interpreting Children's Behavior: Is It Development, Adoption or Something Else?

MEW

Beth Hall

Certain emotional issues that may arise for adopted children, birth parents and adoptive parents are normal under the circumstance of adoption. Sorting out the behaviors of children and interpreting them in the context of the additional issues that adoptive families face can be confusing, hear about strategies and tools that are useful in sorting out the behavioral language of children. We will also discuss temperament, parenting styles and strategies for handling/avoiding power struggles.

For Professionals Only:

Pre and Post Adoption Needs of Adopted Children and Adults

Rm.210

Joyce Maguire Pavao & A Panel of Adopted Adults

Hear from the children who have grown up as they speak to what they needed (and currently need) from adoption related professionals including placement practitioners, clinicians, teachers and other child welfare advocates. The discussion will include suggestions regarding best practices and insights into the experiences of adopted adults whose lived experience, coupled with their professional feedback, will give professionals working in the field concrete ideas to apply to their own practice.

Planning To Adopt: Choices & Implications

Rm. 205

Lynne Fingerman & Lynne Silver & Malaika Parker

It is typical for pre-adoptive parents to place a heavy emphasis on the "how-to's" of adoption. This workshop will focus on the choices and decisions that parents make during the adoption process and how they will impact their long-term family values with an emphasis on preparation and tools that parents have to consider regarding the adoption of children with prenatal exposure, racial identity different than their own, ongoing contact with birth family members, gender selection, older child placement and matching in adoption.

LGBTQ Adoptive Parenting: Kids, Schools & Outsiders

Rm. 206

Renata Moreira, Tarah Fleming & Charlie Spiegel

How to advocate for preschool, later schooling and other community environments that support children with LGBTQ parents and their children. Suggestions for handling related bullying and bigotry will be presented by speakers, who are activists and LGBTQ adoptive parents themselves. We will discuss how to address family issues in developmentally appropriate ways including discussion of questions from your adopted child, their friends and outsiders to your family.



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Afternoon Session II:

Birth Parent Stories: Where the Adoption Journey Begins

Rm. 203

Brenda Romanchik & Susan Dusza Guerra Leksander

The adoption journey begins with a birth parent's decision to place their child for adoption, yet this story often goes untold and unheeded in adoption practice. Hear directly from birth parents who will address placement practices, clinical needs and implications for adoptive parents. Workshop participants will be invited to challenge stereotypes about birth parents and why their stories are important for all members of the adoption constellation.

Navigating Open Adoption Relationships

Community Room

Ann Wrixon & Rachel Herndon & Lisa Clark

Recognizing that there are no cookie cutter approaches to building a positive triad relationship, speakers will offer practical guidance as well as research-based insight into how triad members can learn to manage complex feelings with particular emphasis on avoiding interactions that place children in the middle or feeling as if they must choose who to be loyal to. Speakers will include a discussion of new means of communication including electronic and social media.

Transracial/Transnational – Voices of Those Who Have Lived The Experience

MEW

Katie Wynen & A Panel of Transracially Adopted Adults

Hear from adults who were raised in transracial or international adoptive families. They will discuss their own growth over time and offer concrete suggestions about parenting strategies that helped them navigate their racial and adoptive identity as well as cautionary tales of those that did not and address the lifetime issues common to being raised by parents of a different racial/ethnic group.

Schools and Adoption: Curriculum, Bias & Inclusion

Rm. 202

Beth Hall & Julia Weber

Schools are places where children spend a great deal of their time, starting with preschool and extending through the high school years and beyond. How can parents assess schools in terms of their adoption friendliness, inclusion and knowledge? How can parents get the most out of their child's school and advocate for their child when the curriculum is challenging to adoption and/or other adoption related issues arise?

Siblings In Adoption: By Birth, By Adoption

Rm. 210

Susan Ito & triad-sibling panel

Adoption creates all kinds of sibling connections – children in the same family who have entered that family after being born to different birth parents or as sibling groups from the same birth parents, children growing up in different families due to the adoption of one sibling and not another (or the adoption of genetically related siblings by different families) and non-adopted and adopted siblings living in the same family. Here from a panel of triad members/siblings to hear their insights on navigating the complexity of these relationships.

Race, Class & Gender in Adoption

Rm. 205

Malaika Parker

Adoptive parents of color must explore how adoption intersects with the experiences they are already living relative to the intersections of race, class and gender. Discussions about race in adoption tend to focus on racial differences generated in transracial placements, but this workshop will focus on other important aspects of exclusion and marginalization and how those experiences intersect with children's experience of being adopted.

Parenting of Adopted Tweens & Teens

Rm. 206

Joyce Maguire Pavao

A tween/teen's job is to figure out who he or she is in the world. The tween and teen years, which can start as young as ten or eleven, have often been compared with the preschool years because of the dramatic changes that occur during the move to greater independence. Teens develop a new ability to be introspective and analytical and emotionally their job is to separate from the family, which raises new identity issues for the whole family. The workshop will include practical guidance and parenting strategies.