



OUR ADOPTION STORY: HOW IT STARTED & HOW IT'S GOING

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ADOPTION

A lifelong, intergenerational process which unites the triad of birth families, adoptees, and adoptive families forever. Recognizing the core issues in adoption is one intervention that can assist triad members and professionals working in adoption to better understand the residual effects of the adoption experience.

CORE ISSUES IN ADOPTION

In 1982 Deborah Silverstein and Sharon Kaplan Roszia published a groundbreaking article identifying seven **Core Issues in Adoption**.

Core – applied to each member of the adoption triad/constellation, could be revisited throughout a person(s) life, could be experienced individually or together.

First step to normalizing and destigmatizing adoption for the members, making them feel less isolated.

CORE ISSUES

- LOSS
- GRIEF
- REJECTION
- INTIMACY
- IDENTITY
- CONTROL
- SHAME

LOSS

Loss is created by trauma.

While we readily understand Concrete Loss, Ambiguous Loss is harder to grasp. Can include unmet expectations, loss of relationships, and unfilled dreams. May display unexplainable behaviors that are not recognized as a response to loss.

When possible, maintain relationships between adoption triad or other connections or support groups.

GRIEF

- All members of the adoption triad experience grief, varying in intensity and timing, throughout their lifespan.
- The losses in adoption are difficult to mourn in a society where adoption is seen as a “problem-solving” event.
- The choices and outcomes of adoption does not lessen the grief.

Be open to embrace the grief by letting the person know you are available to them when they are willing and/or able to discuss.

REJECTION

Rejection can be a lens through which individuals filter thoughts and feelings.

Example: A relative says to an adoptive mother, “Is it wise to keep a relationship with her birth mother?” The adoptive mother may hear “Won’t your child reject you as her mother with her birth mother in the picture?”

Don’t try to “fix the problem” or change the subject, offer empathy.

INTIMACY

Refers to emotional closeness in a relationship.

- For some adoptees letting others get close can provoke anxiety.
- Adoptive parents may feel a level of hesitancy about the adoption process which might affect their other relationships.
- Birth parents may struggle with trust in future relationships fearing others will judge them.

Sharing experiences, journaling, devotions, self help books, or talking with an **Adoption Competent** therapist may also help.

MASTERY & CONTROL

Feeling in control provides a sense of safety, security, and mastery over one's life. But Adoption, for everyone is marked by loss of control.

- Lack of or no choice
- Long timeframes and delays
- Fear of the unknown
- Incomplete information

MASTERY & CONTROL

Adults and children commonly try to regain a sense of control by controlling other areas of their lives.

- Identify situations that cause control challenges.
- Explore opportunities for choices that can be controlled.
- Be flexible.
- Nurture a determination to be productive and proud. Feeling successful in one area can ease the urgency to feel in control of everything.

SHAME

“The Intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love or belonging.” Bren’e Brown

Shame impacts an individual's self-esteem and self-worth

Sharing feelings of shame requires vulnerability. Judgement, ridicule, or misunderstanding further fuels shame which can trigger abandonment, grief, and loss. Shame is often the result of secrecy in the name of privacy

Support Groups

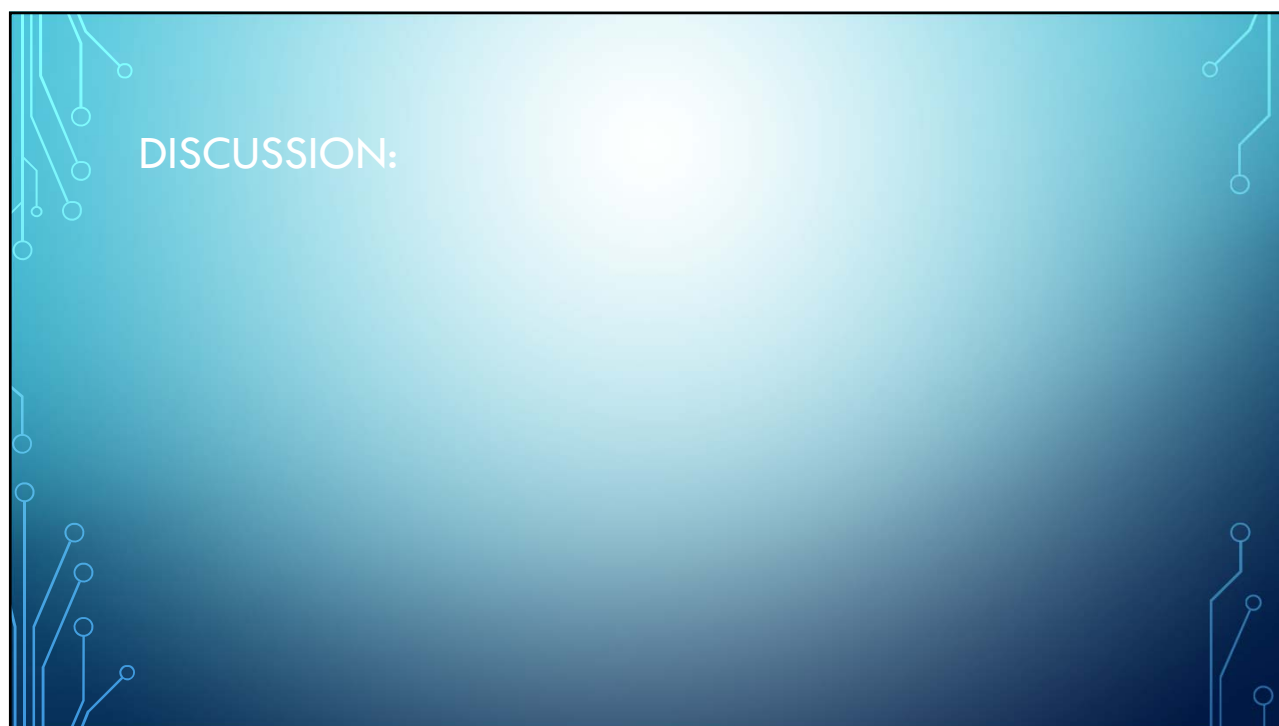
ADDITIONAL CORE ISSUES

Suzanne d' Aversa

- Abandonment
- Entitlement
- Claiming

Marie Dolfi

- Loyalty
- Fitting In



DISCUSSION: