

ADOPTION CIRCLES

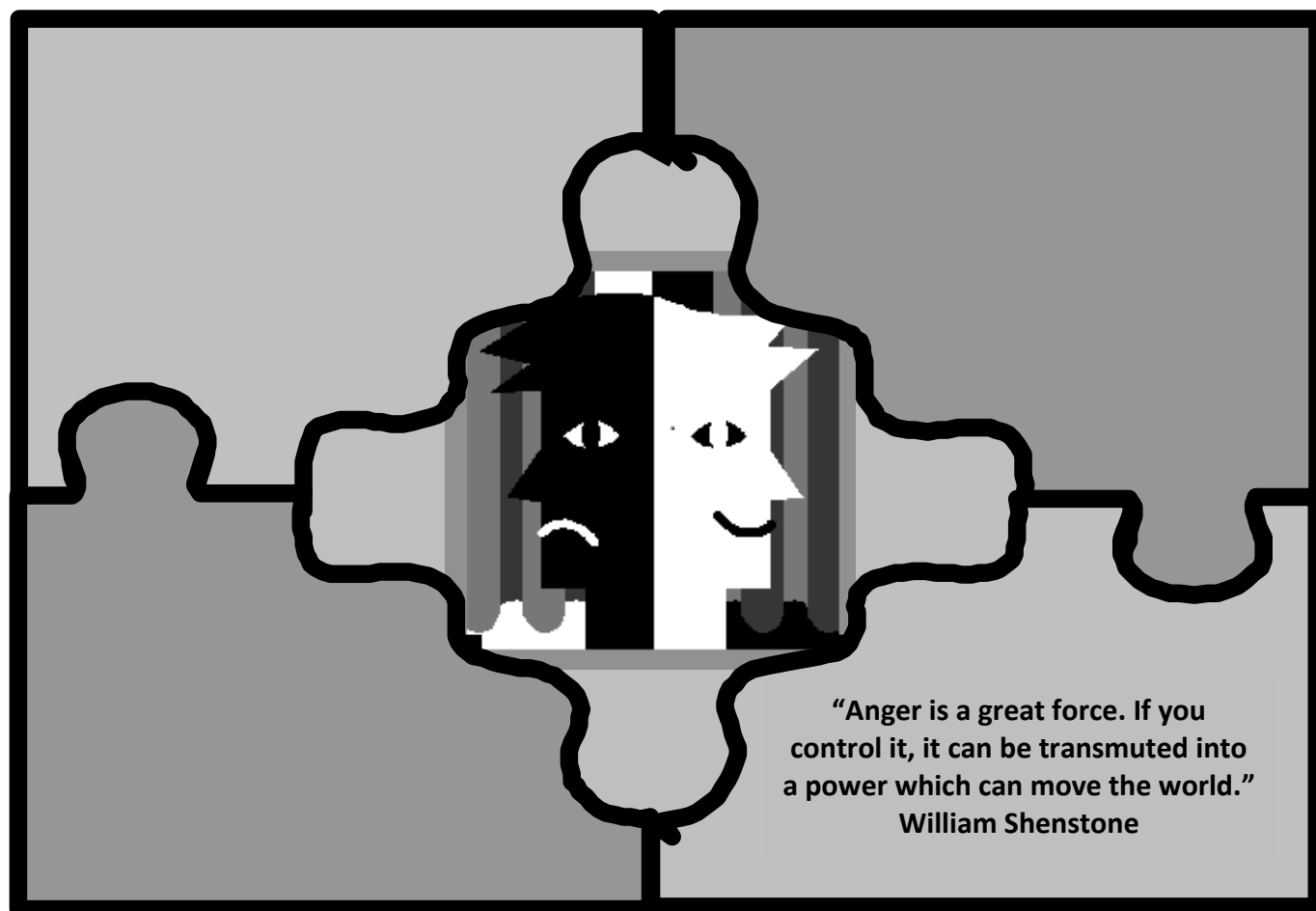
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Anger

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ADOPTION CIRCLES



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care of the Society

FMNFS FACTS:

Forget Me Not Family Society is a provincially registered, non-profit society and a federally registered charity (#88908 4869 RR0001.) Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$25.00. Our Society was formed for education, consultation, peer counseling and to offer support to all those touched by adoption: adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents, and concerned professionals. Our primary source of income is through membership fees. These funds go directly towards printing, postage, telephone, wireless expenses and supplies.

WHAT WE OFFER:

Experience shows that at various times in life, the issues and concerns of adoption need to be addressed. We provide our members with opportunities to gain further understanding of adoption issues through:

- Conducting monthly support groups in New Westminster, Cloverdale and Kamloops, B.C.
- Individual peer support
- Resource library
- Referrals to professionals and other service groups
- Speakers Bureau to educate groups on post-adoption issues
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Annual weekend workshops

OUR MANDATE:

- To encourage and develop a recognition of the benefits of family preservation and openness in adoption practice.
- To establish and operate a Post Adoption Resource Centre providing education, consultation, counseling and support to those touched by adoption: adoptees, birthparents, adoptive parents, and concerned professionals.
- To provide community education programs, panel presentations and workshops on post adoption issues for any members of the community who wish to learn more about adoption and reunion issues.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER:

ADOPTION CIRCLES is published quarterly and is available by subscription to our Society. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in adoption and post-adoption issues. Comments and contributions are always welcome. Please mail submissions to our office or forward to the Editor at: bjrymer@telus.net The Forget Me Not Society reserves the right to edit all material submitted on the basis of space, relevance, and suitability.

Please note that the material published in the Newsletter, including the article by the Editor, does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Forget Me Not Family Society.

President's Message

by Marnie Tetz

Hi Everyone!

Summer ended and fall began! By the time you read this most of us will have experienced the end of glorious summer and the beginning of fall weather. I hope it becomes more gentle here on the 'wet coast' soon!

The topic of this issue of our AC is **Anger**.



What are we angry about? Those of us in this close knit adoption circle do have anger that sometimes we don't want to admit to because society believes that the emotion of anger is a bad thing that we shouldn't talk about or admit to. However I believe that it's healthy to admit and embrace our anger. Dang it! We have a lot to be angry about. We lost our mother's and our families, and our mother's lost us. How can that not be angrifying? How can that not be mad making?

What if we surrendered to our anger? What if we just let ourselves *feel* anger? We can do this safely. I did. My husband has cancer...we've been dealing with his cancer for almost 6 years. Recently there have been other health issues arise and damn it! Damn it! I

surrendered to my anger...I threw a few pillows...and cried many tears.

I WAS ANGRY...I surrendered to my feelings of anger...it felt good to do so. I am still angry. However, surrendering briefly helped so that I could build up my reserve of strength and once again put things in perspective. One foot in front of the other.

Once again Amy and Bernadette have put many hours into making this issue of Adoption Circles another great edition. Sit back in your cozy spot with your favourite drop and learn that it's best to feel your feelings rather than denying they exist.

~ Marnie

From your Editor ~ Rymer Writes

Greetings and welcome to our 66th issue of Adoption Circles. Our theme in this AC is Anger. This is a most intriguing topic for me as anger has the potential to be very destructive or very constructive, depending on how we understand and manage our anger.

Having been raised in a very large and very religious family, there was lots of focus on 'happy' but little or no focus on mad/sad feelings which were actually considered to be unacceptable. While I agree that focusing on the positive is a healthy approach to life, I believe that if we are realistic we will seek a balanced approach to understanding both happy/glad and mad/sad emotions. Because the expression of mad/sad emotions were discouraged in my original family (as was the case in many families) recognizing, accepting and dealing with anger has been a huge challenge for me.

In researching how anger is manifested in those who have lost loved ones to adoption, I discovered ample information available on the web ranging from well researched articles to blogs focusing on mad/sad feelings and experiences. I also discovered to my shock and disgust that professionals in many health related fields have known about the negative effects

of adoption on both mother and child for seven decades - YES you read me right, SEVEN decades - at least since 1943. A list of research articles for your reference is included in this issue of our AC.



Despite all that was known, adoption practices and the adoption industry flourished in the western world from the early 1940s until the mid-1980s. While the number of adoptions has decreased significantly since then, adoption is still legal and still regarded by many as "the perfect solution."

In preparation for this AC I read many of the research articles which detail a long and sordid or perhaps morbid history. Let me summarize for you:

1. Women who were pregnant and not married were considered blight on their families, churches and society and were targeted by the adoption industry.

2. Women who were married and who could not become pregnant were favoured by the adoption industry.
3. Social workers and other health care professionals targeted pregnant women who were not married. Withholding information, providing false information and pressuring the soon-to-be mothers to agree to adoption were common and in fact sanctioned practices. .
4. Counselling and ongoing supportive services were available for the adoptee and the adoptive family. Once adoption papers were signed, there were no counselling or ongoing supportive services available for the mother.
5. Money changed hands and was considered fee for service. While it was acceptable and in some jurisdictions legal for adopting couples to pay small or large sums of money to the adoption agency, it was unacceptable and illegal for the soon-to-be mother to accept money.

Is it then any wonder that we are, or have been angry? My wonder extends to how we heal, why some of us fare much better than others and why some of us continue on our healing journey while

others find the journey too arduous to continue, and give up.

Fortunately we have wonderful friends to help and support us. Close at hand we have each other in the FMNFS who are there for us through happy/glad and mad/sad times. We also have friends in the healing professions (e.g. Evelyn Robinson, Nancy Verrier, Joe Soll) and their articles and books to help us recognize, understand and deal with our anger.

We hope that the articles and information in this issue further your understanding of anger and why some anger is justifiable. As with other issues, we also include quotes about anger from famous people for further reflection. My deepened understanding of the constructive properties of anger is reflected in a quote from a not-so-famous person, included below.

“Anger makes the heart grow stronger.”
~ Bernadette Rymer ~

Anger in Adoption: Reading Resources

. By Bernadette Rymer

For me, reading these articles on the negative effects of adoption on mother and child helped me understand that my anger is justified. Once I got that, then my anger shifted from a being a destructive force that ate away at me and harmed treasured

relationships to a constructive anger that caused me to stand tall as it fueled my determination to heal myself, and do what I can to support others in their healing journeys. We hope exploration of the titles and issues will be a positive experience for you.

The Restitutive Process in Children Following Radical Separation From Family and Culture

Constance Rathburn, M.S.S., Latitia Virgilio, M.S.S. and Samuel Waldfogel, Ph.D. (1958) American Orthopsychiatric Association.

Find online at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>: Clinical Psychology > Health & Behavioral Clinical Psychology > American Journal of Orthopsychiatry > Vol 28 Issue 2 >

Mental Health of Adoptive Child, What They Knew and Didn't Tell Us, by Origins Inc

These are summaries of research articles dating back to 1943 detailing the trauma caused by separation from mother by adoption. Website: <http://originsvic.tripod.com/mentalhealth/adoptedchild.html>

Effects of Adoption on Mental Health of the Mother- What They Knew and Didn't Tell Us.

Summaries of research articles dating back to 1968. Find online at: OriginsCanada.org>Adoption Trauma > Trauma to Surrendering Mothers > Effects of Adoption on the Mental Health of the Mother: What Professionals Knew and Didn't Tell Us.

Anger In The Natural Mother: 1982

*Excerpt from Effects of Adoption on the Mental Health of the Mother:
What Professionals Knew and Didn't Tell Us.
Reprinted courtesy of Origins Canada.*

A summary of: Kate Ingles, "The Relinquishment Process and Grieving." from the Proceedings of the Third Australian Conference on Adoption: Changing Families. Adelaide, 1982.

Ingles talks about the anger of the natural mother following the loss of her baby. Anger at her helplessness and the officialdom that represents the power to decide what happens to her baby, a power she is without. Anger at all those known and unknown persons who could not and would not rescue her. Anger at her prolific body, so at odds with her circumstances. Anger at her parents, anger at friends, anger at the "unfairness" that allows the man involved freedom from the experience she must endure and integrate.

Anger at the adoptive parents for all they have and all she needs. Anger at the world that elevates motherhood to sanctity but failed her as a mother. Anger at her discovery that "approved of and supported motherhood" is very rigidly defined and

excludes her. Anger on behalf of her baby who she feels is defined as unwanted unless she is removed. Anger that must be suppressed and contained that could provide a list of causes and directions too immense and personally derived for us to take account of.

She may, if the common numbness described by such mothers does not lift for many years, only come to anger years after her lost baby is grown up and the specific persons involved are far distant or dead in her present life. She may begin her pregnancy in anger and resentment and continue for years with a randomly placed rage.

www.OriginsCanada.org is dedicated to supporting those separated by adoption

"We are often called "angry" and "bitter", but there is a difference between righteous anger and anger for its own sake: our babies were taken from us and many had less than desirable outcomes... the "better life" used as a tool of coercion."

~ Valerie Andrews, Origins Canada

An Outstanding Success!

by Amy Newman, Associate Editor

Thanks to everyone who participated in the U.B.C. presentation to graduate students in the School of Social Work at U.B.C, the result was "outstanding" and "very polished." The event was spearheaded by our editor Bernadette who spent countless hours over many months in preparation for it. Read all about it in this issue.

This newsletter was delayed for several reasons, including Bernadette being incapacitated by a virus

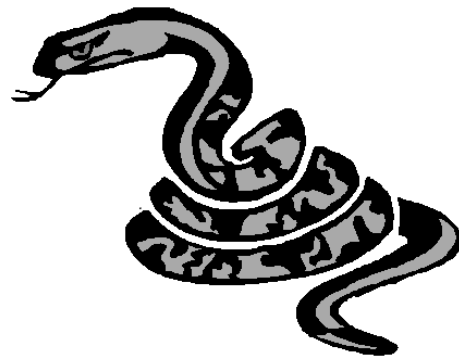
for a month. Get well soon Bernadette, your shoes are hard to fill!

To honor our commitment to our members to produce four issues of AC each year, we plan to publish our Fall issue #67 as soon as possible. The theme of our next issue is "Write from the Heart. It will include a report and creative submissions from the Fall workshop on Sharing our Stories.

Anger as a Serpent

by Colleen Rudd

I can choose to look at anger as a serpent. A serpent that kept me from a relationship with my Mom. A serpent that leached vital life force from my being. OR I can choose to thank my anger as a motivator and a driving force following the separation of my daughter and me due to adoption. This brewing, stewing anger kept me determined to reunite with my daughter. In present time IT keeps me seeking a deeper relationship with her now. Thank you anger!



At a magical point in my reunion I discovered my anger (unacceptable to express in my family of origin!) was an emotion I had turned inward in order to conform and survive, and as a result, this repressed emotion was directly responsible for many, many years of "unexplained" depression. A low grade melancholy that no one could seem to explain, let alone treat!

TRULY, - once coming upon Joe Soll and a supportive group of enlightened witnesses at FMNFS, All of whom are my soul family, a light bulb came on. I was on my way to my own reality, my daughter's reality and a healing path to recovery!

A - angst

N - now aware of the cause

G - great to be alive, and thriving in the realm of healing

E - emergence of SELF

R - reality, clear and present

Yours, in healing and health!

~ Colleen Rud

"Anger is the prelude to courage." ~ Eric Hoffer

"A man that does not know how to be angry does not know how to be good."

Henry Ward Beecher

"Anger is an essential part of being human. People are taught to deny themselves anger, and in this, they are actually opening themselves up to hate. The more you deny yourself the freedom to be angry, the more you will hate. Let yourself be angry, and hate will disintegrate, and when hate disintegrates, forgiveness prevails!

The more you deny that you are angry, in attempts to be "holy" the more inhuman you will become, and the more inhuman you will become, the harder it will be to forgive."

~ C. JoyBell C. (author of Saint Paul Trois Chateaux: 1948: A Novella)

Forget Me Not Family Society

PRESENTATION TO GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Wednesday October 9th, 2013

by Bernadette Rymer



Dr. Kruk, Bernadette Rymer, Gail Davies, Margaret Ferguson, Steve Sharpe

The Forget Me Not Family Society has been involved in many advocacy and education events during the past year. Our FMNFS mandate (see details on page 2 of our Adoption Circles Newsletter) specifies that a major purpose of our society is to raise awareness and to educate people about adoption and reunion issues. In response to this purpose we are delighted to share with you about a major event which occurred recently.

A brief history will help to set the stage for this presentation. In February 2012 while preparing for our Winter 2012 issues of our AC (theme - Education) I emailed the Social Worker programs in more than 20 universities in Canada (e.g. UBC, SFU, universities in Kamloops, Ontario and Alberta) in the U.S. (e.g. Harvard, Yale, Johns Hopkins) and Australia to inquire if they offer any programs or course work in the effects of adoption loss, trauma,

grief, search and reunion, or are they considering offering such courses in the near future. Eleven universities responded with a 'No'. The remaining universities did not respond. The response was disheartening but not surprising. However not being one to take a 'NO' sitting down, I pursued a somewhat interesting response from one professor at the University of British Columbia.

A series of conversations followed with Dr. Edward Kruk, Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at U.B.C. The FMNFS was interested in how to create a working relationship with students in the graduate program for the purpose of involving graduate students in helping us with the review and possibly the presentation of our 6 week community education course. At that time Dr. Kruk informed us that while there were no courses being offered at U.B.C which addressed post adoption and reunion

issues, he was hopeful that such a course could be developed in the near future. Early this year we received an invitation from Dr. Kruk inviting us to make a three hour presentation to his students this fall, as part of a new course he was in the process of developing.

Course Name:

Social Work and Social Justice: Child and Family

FMNFS Topic:

Adoption and the Rights of Children to Know their Biological Origins

Recognizing the magnitude of this opportunity, (to our knowledge the first ever presentation in a North American university) we were delighted to accept this invitation. Thus began a 6 month intensive preparation for what this presentation might look like, goals, process, content and who would be involved on the presentation team.

Our first step was to invite all FMNFS members and other resource people to offer suggestions about major points that should be included in the presentation in order to most effectively meet the needs of the students to learn the truth of adoption loss, as we have lived it. We received responses from many people, too many to name here. All responses were considered, collated and points were included in our presentation. To each and every contributor we are sincerely grateful. We would like to acknowledge several people who spent considerable time and effort presenting their thoughts, researching and sending me references for books and articles:

- Our members: Mary Anne Dubeski (see her response in full in this issue), Marnie Tetz, Rob Granton for their considered responses and encouragement;
- To our friends in Canada and abroad who also willingly gave their permission to use their work and research in our presentation content:
 - In Canada: Wendy Rowney, ASK (Adoption Kinship Support) Karen Lynn, Heather Andrews, Sandra Falconer Pace, CCNM (Canadian Council of Natural Mothers)
 - From Australia: Evelyn Robinson
 - From the U.S.A.: Nancy Verrier and Joe Soll

Next we developed our dynamic presentation team:

- Bernadette Rymer, Birth Mother, Content Development, Event Facilitator
- Nancy Kato, Birth Mother, Co-Facilitator and Panel Moderator
- Gail Davies, Birth Mother, Panel Member
- Margaret Ferguson, Adoptee, Panel Member
- Steve Sharp, Adoptive Father, Panel Member
- Elizabeth Christian, Adoptive Mother, Member/Supporter

Presentation: Fifteen graduate students and Professor Kruk attended our three hour presentation which was comprised of a variety of activities including:

- a panel presentation, representing all triad members,
- small group reading and discussion of three landmark articles, then sharing key points and inquiry questions with all students,
- general information sharing, and
- open question/discussion format.

Evaluation: The session evaluation was a two part process. Prior to, and at the conclusion of the presentation students were asked to individually reflect on, and write down their knowledge and understanding of six issues or aspects of adoption. A summary of student reflections and responses before and after the presentation is included following this article. Overall rating of the presentation from students and from Dr. Kruk ranged from positive/useful (5 responses) to very positive/very useful (11 responses).

Impressions: Students appeared to be very engaged in our presentation. Many were clearly stunned by facts and issues discussed as was evident by their 'deer in the headlights' reactions to many facts shared and issues discussed.

There is a distinct difference in both the quantity and quality of student responses following the presentation when compared to responses noted prior to the presentation. Post-presentation responses reflect a much deeper understanding and appreciation of the complexities of issues surrounding adoption and reunion.

Verbal feedback to our team members during the break and following the session revealed further responses and expressions of surprise, shock and gratitude which were not included on the evaluation form.

Dr. Kruk thanked us several times for what he described as our “outstanding presentation” and that he was “very impressed with our team work.” He added that our presentation was very different from what he had expected: it was much more intense. He invited us to address his students graduate next year, an invitation we enthusiastically accepted.



SUMMARY OF STUDENT RESPONSES, KEY POINTS and QUESTIONS

FMNFS Presentation to U.B.C. Students in the School of Social Work

October 9, 2013

1. Student Responses to KNOW – LEARN Reflection /Evaluations

Issue	KNOW Before the presentation students were asked to reflect on their current understanding of the following issues	LEARN At the end of the presentation students were asked to reflect on what they had learned and their new understandings of the issues
Primal Wound	• Wound from giving up a child- natural • Child’s experience of being taken away • Breaking a natural relationship • Devastating- PTSD • Sounds like an evolutionary attachment- pain when child is no longer with mum (my guess?) • Never heard of it- has to do with effects adoption has on birth mothers and child • New term for me • Little or no knowledge of this concept • ? no idea	• The innate connection and permanent trauma caused when the birth mother and child are separated • Loss experienced by all • Initial separation of child from birth mother • Starting from separation many complex feelings • The wound created as a result of the separation caused by adoption • Attraction between parent and child – important for us to learn more about this • Anxiety, loss, fear • Most salient aspect of the adoption experiences for biological parents and child • Understanding trauma associated with adoption for all 3 in the triad. • Loss of identity can affect adoptee for life • Reunion should be the solution but many issues can arise • Reunions don’t always work • (We) Need to attend to language/terminology- important • Adoptee- perfect or acting out! • Inner child hurt and regression

Effects on Birth Mother	• Very difficult grief and loss, • Loss, gratitude, sadness, regret, depression, isolation • Stress, trauma - Perhaps some relief in some cases • Longing for reconnection • Deep loss & grief often unrecognized & unacknowledged	• Lifelong, unexpressed guilt and grief, sadness, loss • Emptiness, shame and feeling of unworthiness • Huge trauma, grief and loss, Depression • Loneliness and secret keeping • Feelings of uselessness • Effects on feelings of self worth, • Often affects relationships forever • Not enough support services for mother- except for your Society • Birth mothers are left wondering and feeling oppressed as the system does not have a way to support them post adoption • Loss can last or even first occur much later in life • Loss still felt even following reunion • Lack of rights and true informed consent • Many mothers do not have other children • Mothers did not have much choice in the process • Systematically birthmothers have no value
Rights of Adoptees	• Right to know birth family and history • To build relationships in safe environments • Rights rarely discussed	• Very few rights • Need to improve access to information • Often Adoptees feel they don't have the right to interfere in mother's life • To be trusted for their capacities to accept and process information about their history • To have birth and adoptive parents be well educated about the whole process • Right to know biological family, identity, culture and heritage • Right to connect and follow-up • Often searching for mirror image • Can seek records but it costs \$\$\$ • Significant advancements in BC and Canada • If a nondisclosure clause is in effect, can't disclose information until 2 years post death
Rights of Mothers	• Previously very few rights • To know her child (not acknowledged) • To stay in touch • To nurture her child when child is ready/wanting • Find child only if child requests	• Due to stigma of single mothers some feel they still don't have a choice (I disagree) • Lack of choices, mothers mislead and lack of true informed consent • Impact of keeping secrets affects mother for life • Mothers have a right to full informed consent before the adoption • Freedom of information before adoption • Mother has a right to know their child is safe and to reunite with child, but many mothers feel they don't have the right to look for their child • Inner child hurt and regression to age when she lost her child to adoption • Integrity of records seems to be an issue
Open Adoption	• Ability to trace roots • Adopted child can connect/know birth mother • Mother can know her child is alive • Birth mother able to continue	• Is essential but we still don't know the full effects • Not a legally binding agreement • "Contract of the heart" not legally binding • Both sets of parents and child know one another and are able to make contact

	- relationship - Both sets of parents know each other- visiting rights vary - Requires collaboration of triad - Challenging w/o deep understanding & respect - Considered to be in the best interests for most adoptees	- Support services are available for adoptive parents - Nothing – no support-available for birth parents - Full custody of the child - Fathers must be included on birth certificate - Open in BC but vetoes - Open adoption in best interest of child- but who decides - Available in Canada - Major advances in BC and Canada - Inter-country adoption “selling feature” for some adoptive parents
Adoptive Parents	- Able to welcome new child into family - Care for and love child - Create opportunities for child - Gratitude - Fear of child being taken back. - Have good intentions - Are legal guardians - Cannot offer payment/incentives to birth mother - A widely diverse population, some supporting and some opposing open adoption.	- Allowed to change birth name - Should always be honest with child - Should not keep secrets – honesty from beginning is best for child - Need to understand importance of child’s identity, culture and heritage - Need to attend to their feelings about loss and reunion- do not impose on adoptee during process - Fear, challenges raising an adoptive child, love - Can be fearful, hurt by (adult) child looking for birth family - The need to search is often not a fault of their parenting but the primal wound - Successful when allowing adopted children to pursue birth parents - Are recognizing the importance and benefits of open adoption.
What I found most interesting: - Personal stories - The Primal Wound - Deeper understanding about the lifelong pain of adoption process for mother and child - Covering the psychological effects on birth mothers because I used to consider only relationship between adoptive parents and adoptees - Attraction between parent and child - Gender roles - Social expectations of women - Social worker working in the best interest of the child and mother, being more aware, needing better understanding - Lack of support for birth mothers - Understanding the language/terminology - Vivid experience of the triad members - North America/Ireland/Australia created the adoption industry		I would have liked to hear more about: - Successful adoptions - Personal stories - Reunions - The healing part, strategies- how we can help to heal people - Role of adoptive parents - Role of the social worker and how we can make a difference - Open adoptions - International adoptions - Legal ramifications of BC adoption legislation - Aboriginal families/ specific connections between MCFD and Aboriginal families - Current foster system - So much more to learn
Responses to “Please rate how useful this session was to you:” Positive/ Useful (5 students) Very Positive/ Very Useful (10 students) One student added: AMAZING!		

2. GROUP READING and DISCUSSION of Three Landmark Articles



Dr. Kruk, Gail Davies and students in a small group reading and discussion session.

3. SUMMARY of STUDENT KEY POINTS AND QUESTIONS

Three Landmark Articles

1. Healing the Primal Wound: (Part 1 and 2) Nancy Verrier

Key Points

- Primal Wound started with separation from the mother
- Reunion
 - When relationship is initiated there can be difficulties - May not go as planned
 - So much focus on reunion that adoptee and first mother become enmeshed
 - First mother or adoptee may not be receptive
 - Adoptee has the right to write a letter and follow-up
 - Everyone in triad has some fear
 - Adoptee want first mother to be always available
 - There can be a sexual/sensual draw between mother and adoptee- important to normalize but not act on this attraction
- Adoptee adopts personal of “perfect child” or “acting out”
- Regression is common
- Validating experience of adoptee is important
- Important for first mother to address her own feelings so she does not burden adoptee or adoptive parents
- Isolation – being cut off from information and resources re the healing process
- Birth mother given NO opportunity to grieve - keeps impacting many aspects of her life
- Where does she process feelings about her child, resentment, shortfall on her “mothering”
- Adoptive mom has conflicting feelings about child’s need/wanting to search for birth mother
- Adopted child stuck in the middle.

Questions

- Focus on mothers but not on fathers?
- When mothers willingly give up children for adoption does all this stigma still exit?
- How do you know when adoption is appropriate for a family situation?
- What is the role of the adoptive parents in the reunion process?

2. Sinking the Mother Ship, by Evelyn Robinson

Key Points

- The tiny visible part of the adoption iceberg is the benign positive part of adoption
- The rest of the iceberg is hidden:
 - The threat (to mothers) , dangers
 - Mishandling of attachment and its importance,
 - Combination of beliefs – social expectations
 - The link of sin and sexual behaviour for the mother
 - Pregnancy in unmarried women was hidden and shameful for family, the mother and the child
 - Forced adoptions- mothers did not have informed consent, or real choice- information withheld

Questions:

- Do women today actually have a choice about giving up their babies for adoption?

3. Birth Fathers and Adoption, by Dr. Gary Clapton

Key Points

- Fathers suffer trauma similar to mothers
- Feelings of loss, guilt and shame
- Experience loss and abandonment of both mother and child
- Fathers rarely express their emotions
- Fathers had no choice- not considered-
- Father's name often not on the birth certificate

Questions

- How to define their relationship after meeting /reunion?
- Competing rights of triad members?



Gail Davies, Margaret Ferguson, Steve Sharpe, Nancy Kato

U.B.C. Member Contribution

How Adoption Affects Adoptees

by Mary Ann Dubeski, adoptee

What is important for social workers to know about how adoption affects adoptees:

1.) Adoption is a permanent change in an adoptee's life which should be avoided the way you would avoid stepping in front of a speeding train, or pushing someone else in front of a speeding train.

2.) Adoption causes loss, grief, and lifelong trauma. The loss is great: loss of mother, family, ancestors, heritage, genetic connection, history. Adoption loss is not recognized as a valid reason to grieve by today's society. Adoptees are often told to "Get over it. Stop being a victim." Adoptees have to repress many emotions and are often stuck with "complicated grief", post-traumatic stress issues, and are often told by mental health professionals that they have "no reason to be ill because adoption is not a mental health issue."

3.) Adoption should only be permitted in rare cases when a child is a true orphan, with no capable family members, or when the mother is dangerous to the child's survival. Mothers who are "too young" should not have their babies taken away from them because of their youth. Youth, in parenting, is an advantage in many ways, and these young mums (and dads) may need some teaching and support to learn parenting skills. "Adoption is a permanent solution to a temporary problem." Youthful parents will mature. No one stays young forever. But adoption causes children to be lost forever.

4.) Remember: You can never replace Mother.
Book reference: *Primal Wound* by Nancy Verrier

5.) The loss of the original family cannot be made up by adoption into a family of genetic strangers, no matter how wealthy, willing, or loving these strangers are. Something will always be missing in the child's heart and psyche. It is very difficult for non-adoptees to understand the depth and breadth of the loss that

adoptees have suffered. The concept of "as if born to" is dishonest. It should never be allowed in adoption. Social workers and adoptive parents who foist it on adoptees are causing everyone emotional pain.

6.) Children, even newborn babies, are not blank slates. They are primed to bond to their natural mothers and feel the loss of the natural mother if they are removed from her after birth. Removal at birth is devastating. It changes brain development and makes the adoptee more prone to depression, stress, and relationship and other issues throughout their lives.

7.) No one should ever interfere with a mother during her pregnancy, labour, delivery and post-partum recovery, nor coerce her into making an "adoption plan" before the baby is born. A mother should be given every opportunity to bond with her newborn, to feel baby's skin, breastfeed and care for her baby. Baby needs this. Mother and baby should be left unmolested by all others who want to take the baby away. It is in the best interests of the child to be with mother during the first few months of life until weaning. Often, a first time mother does not even know how the birth of the child will affect her. She is naïve and has no clue. She should not be talked into an "adoption plan" before the baby's birth. She should not be told that she will fail in life, be on welfare forever, and that no one will ever marry her if she keeps her child. Coercion should be illegal. Also, prospective adopters should not be present at the birth. It is an intimate and important bonding time for mom and baby and should be respected. After mothering a child for several months, if the mother feels incapable of parenting due to her circumstances, then an adoption plan may be made.

8.) When a child is adopted, the child has a right to know about their adoption. Secrecy about the adoption should never be allowed. Social workers should make sure that the adoptive parents have told

the child the truth at an early age. There should be follow-up. All records, all identifying information about the natural mother and father should be available to the adoptee when they are ready. The adoptee should be the one to decide when they are ready, and if they want to search for their natural parents. As a late discovery adoptee, I know how devastating and humiliating it is to find out late in life that I was adopted. Everybody knew, and I was never supposed to find out. My ethnic identity and heritage, and family were purposely hidden from me so that I would “love my parents” exclusively. With DNA tests available, the internet, Facebook, and a well-connected world, it is only a matter of time before any adoptee is contacted by natural family members, or discovers non relation to parents through a DNA test. Reference: the UN Commission on The Rights Of The Child

9.) Social Workers should make sure that prospective adoptive parents have undergone psychological screening and tests to ensure that they are not adopting to replace a child who has died, been lost in divorce custody, or in the case of infertility, an unborn natural child. No one has a “right to adopt.” Many people are happier in the long run adopting a puppy, parrot, or kitten. Adoption means you will be raising someone else’s child. This will never change. You will be their protector, nurturer, and guardian. But you will never be their true mother and father. You can never give an adoptive child what their natural parents can give them. Many adoptions are not “happy” adoptions and adoptive parents often regret adopting a stranger’s child, although they are not allowed to say it. Adoption should be discouraged as a way to

“build a family,” as it is actually a way to destroy natural families.

10.) Two quick ways to fix adoptions:

- a. Money should never change hands in an adoption. There should be no legal fees, donations to orphanages, admin fees or expenses paid for the mother’s living expenses, social worker’s expenses, doctor’s fees, or agency’s fees. If no money changed hands, if it were illegal for money to change hands, there would be fewer, if any, adoptions.
- b. If infant adoption were not allowed, there would be far fewer adoptions. Babies would stay with their natural moms, where they belong, and grow up normal. Foster kids who need homes would find more placements. Infant adoption should be outlawed because everyone prefers newborns.

11.) Adoption of children is not the answer to Africa’s or Asia’s problems. Trans-racial adoption and growing up in a foreign culture is bad for the child, and bad for the country that loses the child. Adoption is part of the colonial mentality in any country.

12.) Every social worker should read *Primal Wound*, by Nancy Verrier.

This article was submitted as part of the FMNFS Oct 2013 presentation to UBC grad students

“Anger is a valid emotion. It's only bad when it takes control and makes you do things you don't want to do.” ~ Ellen Hopkins

“There's nothing wrong with anger provided you use it constructively.”
~ Wayne Dyer

U.B.C. Resource Contribution

When Women's Legal Rights Are Compromised: Issues of Informed Consent in Adoptions

by Sandra Falconer Pace

In the sixties and seventies, the heyday of adoption, children of unmarried women were routinely, and not always legally, separated from their mothers. It was held that, by very fact of their youth and unmarried state, these women were unfit mothers. They were simultaneously punished and cleansed by the act of separating their children from them, and they were to go forward anew in their lives.

These women were required/coerced/had agreed to give up their children of "their own free will." The surrender document signed by one 17-year-old mother indicates that

"After careful consideration of the above alternatives and of my own free will I hereby make application under Section 30 of The Child Welfare Act, 1966, to surrender custody of my child..."

The mother who made this declaration did so after being "interviewed by a representative of the Department of Child Welfare concerning planning for myself and my child." Clearly these statements indicated a concern of the part of the government, as represented by the Department of Public Welfare, to ensure that the mother surrendering her child did so with informed consent, which means knowing the outcomes of her actions and the alternatives available to her.

The quality of the interviews with prospective and new mothers sometimes did include offers of assistance in keeping the child and sometimes did not. It largely depended on the social worker and his or her orientation and ethics. In fact, all the information provided to the new mother depended upon the orientation and ethics of the social worker with whom she happened to make contact. Society's orientation was clear: women were shamed by the fact of their pregnancies and the stigma attached to being an unmarried mother, regardless of how the pregnancy

came to be, whether by freely enjoyed sex, rape or incest.

In fact, the 'decision' so made by the (often) young mother was constrained and uninformed. The societal construction of unmarried pregnancy left her shamed and guilty. Young and unable often to support herself, she could not imagine how she would live with her child, especially where she lacked family or the child's father's support. In many cases, basic information was not available to her. For example, numerous mothers attest to not having been told there was a revocation period during which they could regain their child. The surrender form above does not give any indication of a revocation period, though one was in existence at the time. Even when no adoptive parents had yet been identified for that particular child, a mother's incapacity to parent was often heightened by comparison with the excellence of the fictitious adoptive parents waiting for her child.

If the mother was to make this decision under her own free will, what would she have needed to know in order for her consent to be truly informed? At a minimum, she would have to know the possible and likely outcomes for herself and her child. She would need open and complete information, as it was available in the common knowledge, professional practices and scholarly literature of the time. She would need *clarity* and *transparency*, as these principles are now named, to make an informed decision. As issues of truly informed consent come to be discussed among medical professionals, the simple notion of withholding pertinent information in life-altering decisions becomes unthinkable today.

To begin with, informed consent twenty or thirty years ago should have included the fact that in the late sixties and the early seventies, unlike today, there was a surplus of adoptable children (Petrie, 1998). That is, more children were being separated from their mothers than were immediately needed for adoption by (usually) older and better-off couples. Thus,

prospective adopters were able to review and choose among many babies, sometimes even walking along rows of babies to find the fortunate one. While mothers were being told their children had 'the perfect adoptive couple waiting for them,' in fact their children went to foster homes and nurseries to wait for adoptive placements. Of course children with any illness were placed in foster care as unadoptable, even when this 'illness' was something that natural families were expected to and did cope with quite commonly, such as colic.

Informed consent would have given these mothers true estimates of the length of time their children would spend or could spend in foster care, and the effects of that foster care on their babies. After all, the premise for the separation of mother and child was that it was 'in the best interests of the child.' How can this 'best interest' be judged in view of the long wait many children experienced in foster care?

Assumptions about the perfection of the adoptive couples would also require examination. Some adoptions are disrupted; that is, some adopting couples return the children they adopt to care at various intervals after the adoption placement and for various reasons, such as happened with Carol Schaefer's son, who had had four 'mothers' by the time he was eight months old. The mother who has lost the child is never notified of this fact, or given the opportunity to regain her child (Schaefer, 1991; Shawyer, 1979). Yet there are mothers whose circumstances may have changed, and who would gladly have accepted the return of their children in these circumstances. After all, while the adopting couple simply wants "a" child, the natural family wants only their child. It is clearly better for a child to be returned to its family, in the circumstance where the child has been separated from the mother soon after birth, and for only economic reasons (i.e., that the mother is poor) than for the child to have to adapt again to another wholly strange family. Should mothers contemplating 'adoption plans' (that is, contemplating losing their children) not be told what the rate of adoption disruptions are for children such as their child? Who keeps these statistics on disrupted adoptions, when so many adoptions are now done privately?

Effects on the Children

From the nineteen fifties and sixties, a growing body of research (Ainsworth, 1962; Bowlby, 1960) indicated that children needed a secure attachment to develop positively. This research was interpreted by the adoption professionals to mean that children could become attached, and were better off becoming attached, to older, better-off adoptive couples when placed as infants. The bonding that these children had already achieved with their mothers was unknown, negated or ignored. Children's needs to know their story and their biological heritage was also downplayed and ignored, despite its importance for many, if not most children (March, 1995). Indeed, this was the period where the *tabula rasa* view of infants was largely popular, because it allowed babies to be passed to other people than their parents without arousing feelings of guilt. In any other circumstance, taking a child from its mother to pass it to a stranger is *kidnapping*, after all.

Today, mothers can be informed about the outcomes of adoption for their children in terms of probabilities, at least. The outcomes for children separated from their mothers and fathers for adoption into stranger families are not all positive. Brodzinsky, Schechter and Henig (1992) note "adopted children and adolescents make up a higher-than-expected proportion of children in psychological distress." They quote rates of 5 % instead of the expected 1 to 2% of the population in outpatient psychotherapy, 10-15% instead of the expected 1 to 2% in residential centres and psychiatric hospitals, and 6-9% instead of 1 to 2% identified by school systems as perceptually, neurologically, or emotionally impaired. There may be overlap between the first and third categories in this analysis, but adding the mutually exclusive categories, we can then expect that 16-24% of adopted children and adolescents are at risk, where we would only expect 3-4% by population. Maté, a physician writing on Attention Deficit Disorder, (2000, p. 52) quotes Wender as saying that "the rate of adoption among ADD patients was 8 to 16 times the prevalence of adopted children in the population at large." How many mothers would consider placing their child for adoption knowing the rate of difficulty for adopted children is four to six times (or more) greater than for children raised by their natural parents?

While not all of this information was available to mothers losing their children in the late sixties and early seventies, some of it was. In Kelly's study (1999), 97% of women losing their children to adoption report having been misled or misinformed of the effects of relinquishment of their children.

More questionable is why authorities were not researching the institution of adoption systematically to discover whether this was of benefit to the children. While fostering of children for various reasons had been widespread in many societies before this time, stranger adoption was a relatively new phenomenon (Wilbush, 2000). Since this was the first time in known history that large numbers of children were separated from their mothers as a social practice, it behooved authorities supporting it to consider whether it was a wise course of action and "in the best interests of the children."

More recent research has attested to the bond created between mother and child during gestation (Verny, 1981; Verrier, 1993). The interruption of this bond leaves both mother and child to grieve, or to mourn, for the loss of the other (Brodzinsky et al (1992). The signs of grieving in infants have been poorly understood until recently. Now, however, acceptance of this fact has followed from the many studies which have shown infants, even newborn infants, can readily recognize and distinguish their mothers from other women. The very strength of this bond has put into question the adopted infants' responsiveness and ability to attach easily to the second mother, or if a foster placement has come between the separation from the mother and the adoption, the second and then the third mother. This information is now readily available in adoption studies. How much of it is transmitted to young mothers before they are asked to give up their child?

Effects on the Mother

The premise of adoption is that the mother losing the child can go on with her life, resume the interrupted trajectory of her life, after the birth of her child. In the sixties and seventies, this was to be accomplished by her silence and the pretence by her, her family and society that the birth had never happened. Where in any other circumstance, a mother is allowed to openly mourn the loss of a child, in this case, the mother was

'to go on as if nothing had happened.' Family never spoke of the child, society ignored the mother's disappearance for a time, and she was never to mention the child or its loss.

The effect of this silencing was to further traumatize the mother (Gediman & Brown, 1991; Jones, 1993; McKay, 1998; Kelly, 1999; Robinson, 2000). Kelly reports that 99% of women in her study consider losing a child to be a traumatic life event, and 94% of these women report not having had adequate counselling. Dr. Rickarby (2001), a psychiatrist in New Zealand who testified before their Inquiry in to Adoption Practices in New South Wales, gives the following sequelae for women who have surrendered their children:

1. Pathological Grief.
2. Personality damage associated with the defences used against grief, against post- traumatic stress phenomena and against depressive decompensation.
3. Personality damage associated with the isolation of the birth experience and the loss of the baby, where this is a secret and there is no significant other to share the feelings and unresolved issues associated with the loss.
4. Axis 1 Psychiatric Disorder
 - a) Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
 - b) Major Depression
 - c) Dissociative Disorder
 - d) Panic Disorder (and other anxiety disorders)
 - e) Dysthymia
 - f) Situational Stress Disorder (often associated with reunion)
 - g) Alcohol Dependent Disorder
 - h) Prescription Drug Dependent Disorder
 - i) There are other drug dependent disorders which are uncommon among these mothers.
5. Personality damage associated with psychiatric illness as a sequel to loss of a baby to adoption.
6. Personality damage associated with long term Pathological Grief.
7. Aggravation and precipitation of a wide variety of physical illnesses which are related to stress.

8. Disorder and incapacity in human relationships.
9. Educational failure and poor employment status.
10. Failure of bonding to other babies.

Informed consent of mothers being counselled into adoption should provide them not only with the fact of these sequelae to losing their child, but also with the prevalence rates of each. After all, when one is urged to take medication by a physician, it is considered good practice to warn the patient of the possible side-effects of that medication. A druggist prints out the list of side effects for the patient, even with simple, common medication. One could surely sue him for malpractice if he urged one to take a drug that had major effects such as these without warning the patient about them.

More recent research has also determined that 40-60% of mothers who lose their children to adoption are never able to have another child (Gediman & Brown, 1991; Kelly, 1999; Rickarby, 2001). That means that between one in three and one in two mothers lose their only child to another couple. Some of these mothers make a choice not to have another child. After all, if you convince a woman that she is, herself, not a good person to parent her first child, why would she risk having another? One study found the rate of hysterectomies in mothers who lost their children to be 41% (Kelly, 1999). For many of these mothers, however, there is simply no known reason they are subsequently unable to have another child. This has been termed *secondary infertility*. Some, an unknown number, of these women go on to become adoptive parents themselves.

Pathological grief in mothers who lose their children to adoption grows with time, it does not diminish (Kelly, 1999). The inability to grieve, becoming frozen in the denial or other stage occurs because the woman cannot grieve openly and also because the child is not dead (Robinson, 2000). The outcome of the child's life is unknown to the mother, but it exists. Thus the grief cannot be resolved, as when a child dies, and is more akin to the grief associated with soldiers who are missing in action. The parent becomes suspended in the grief.

Effects on Subsequent Siblings and other Family Members

Children are not born only to mothers. They are born into families, and these families have a tendency to grow and change over time, adding and subtracting members. There are effects of the loss of a child on the mother's relationships with her parents, spouse(s), other children and siblings. These effects are described by women who lose their children as "protracted negative influences on their lives in the areas of marital relationships, fertility and parenting" (Rosenberg, 1992, p. 43). These negative influences can include, particularly with relation to her parents and future spouse(s), an impairment of the ability to trust. Many women speak of never having the same relationship with their parents again, only partly because it was and is often the parents' decision to have the baby placed for adoption (Gediman and Brown (1991). Mothers' relationships with their siblings may also be affected by the loss of the child. Some mothers cut ties with their families of origin entirely.

Mothers who lose a child to adoption and who are able to have another child or children report powerful effects on their subsequent parenting of other children (Jones, 1993; Rosenberg, 1992). They worry compulsively about and are more protective of these children. They have more difficulty accepting these children's growing independence.

Conclusion

When the state intervenes in a parent's interactions with her own child, the presumption is that something has gone dreadfully wrong, and that only in the interests of the child's health and welfare can this interference be justified. However, for most young, unsupported and pregnant women, there is a presumption of guilt without the possibility of proving themselves innocent. They are convinced without proof that it would be to their child's detriment if they were to raise their own child. No proof can exist, because this is usually the mother's first child. I am not speaking here of situations of proven neglect and/or abuse. I am speaking of the more usual situation where (these days) a mother is approached before the birth of her child to lose her child to a couple with more means.

The instrument used to secure the separation of the mother and child is the mother's own love for her child. It is couched in euphemisms, such as "the gift of love," which convince the mother that if she loves her child, she will give him or her to a stranger who wants a child. Then these mothers are required to make the life-altering decision, sign documents which indicate falsely that they have been given information, if not counselling, about the consequences of this decision, and then left on their own to muddle through with the actual consequences of that decision.

The effects of adoption on the mothers who lose these children and on the children themselves are now becoming known largely through the opening of adoption records so that these mothers and children can find each other. As mothers are found or find their children, they can face the unresolved grief that they have lived with for decades. Adopted adults can find in their first families the circumstances of their loss of those families and of their adoption into their second (or third or fourth) families. In matching their stories, these mothers and children can and do compare outcomes and effects.

Secrecy in adoption primarily protects the adoption brokers. While it is true that past adoptive families were also lied to, in being told these children would

be "as if born to them," current adoptive couples are more likely, if they're honest with themselves and the children they obtain, to realize that these children come to them from mothers who grieve all their lives for the loss of their children. However, without the opening of the records, the adoption brokers have no fears that they will be exposed for their illegal practices (Jarvie, 2001), their lack of provision of truly informed consent, or their simple inhumanity in taking children from their mothers because the more powerful or more well-off want these children.

No health regimen, medication or medical procedure could be prescribed for women with so little information about such serious and such common effects. Can we not provide the same standard of care to young pregnant women in this as we do to all other patients in the health/medical sphere? Why is it all right to cause such damage to women, merely because they are young and unsupported and poor, in order to benefit those who want their children?

Sandra Falconer Pace is a Director of Canadian Council of Natural Mothers. This article was submitted as part of the FMNFS Oct 2013 presentation to UBC grad students and is used with permission.

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Anger Colored Glasses

by Joe Soll 조 살, LCSW,
Psychotherapist & Author

If you believe in the Primal Wound as I do, then it is clear that we adoptees have anger that occurs at the moment of separation from our mothers. This anger is part of us and for the most part, remains hidden from our conscious mind.

We may at some point become aware that we have a lot of anger and do some therapy of one sort or another and resolve our conscious anger issues.

However, there is always the Primal Wound anger lurking in the background. Our seven year old self, whether we know it or not, has rage at not being kept. No matter what our adult self thinks about losing her mom, our 7 year old has the rage and therefore we may look at the world, and in particular our natural mothers, through anger colored glasses without being aware of it.

This means we cannot be objective about our mothers and that we can get angry at them at the drop of a hat. If looking through anger colored glasses is also the way we look at the world in general, then anger will be an even bigger problem.

When an adoptee comes to me and tells me that she is having reunion difficulties, one of the first things I ask her is if her inner child is angry at her mom for not keeping her. Invariably the answer I get is, "She is not angry." I ask how they know this and they tell me that they just know she is not. I ask her to ask her inner child and she will usually immediately repeat, that SHE is not angry.

I ask the adoptee if her Inner Child said that and she repeats that SHE is not angry, clearly not having asked her inner child. I think that the anger is so huge, nuclear perhaps that the adoptee is afraid to hear it from her inner child.

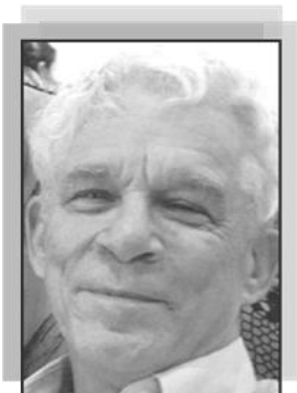
It is normal for our seven year old inner child to be full of rage for not being kept. We need to let our seven year old self express her anger, validate it for her, then, if we are to have a good relationship with our natural mothers we must help our inner child redirect her rage to the event or the circumstances that prevented being kept and away from our natural mothers. To do this our adult self has to believe that our mother had no choice. We must tell this to our inner child until she believes it.

When we convince our IC that it was not her mom's fault, that it's not ok to be angry at mom for something she had no choice about, then we will be able to take the anger colored glasses off. Our relationships with our mothers will improve and we will feel lighter.

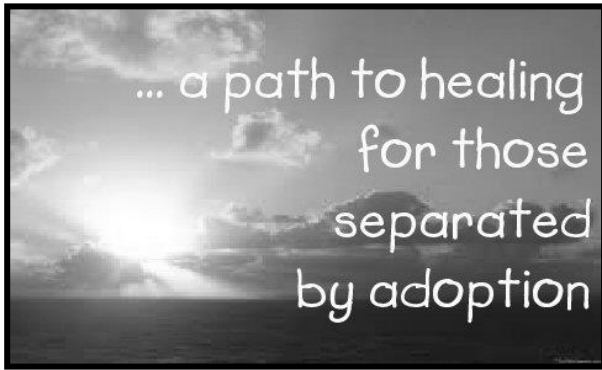
Those glasses are a huge burden. The burden will be lifted. Enjoy.

~ Joe

Joe Soll is the Author of "Adoption Healing... a path to recovery" (1 for moms, 1 for adoptees, 2 for both), and co-author of "Evil Exchange" and "Fatal Flight"



"A mother's losses are the flip side of the adoptee's losses. Just as big, just as important, just as irrevocable, just as painful, just as sad." ~ Joe Soll



B.C. Adoption Healing Weekend Reflections

Two of our members share their experience of Joe Soll's healing weekend
held April 26-28, 2013 in Abbotsford, B.C.

I recently had the opportunity to attend a healing weekend with Joe Soll. I have wanted to do that for ages, but with it being in New York, that was a big obstacle. I also wanted my mom to go at the same time and as soon as I heard about this one in Abbotsford (right where I live!), I asked her if she would come too. She immediately responded that she would, so we attended together.

People familiar with Joe Soll's work know that he stresses feelings, and Inner Child work. Knowing this, I was extremely nervous going to this weekend, as I am quite scared of feeling the intense feelings that I have about adoption in general, and MY adoption and upbringing in particular. I soon found out that I had nothing to worry about. Although Joe DOES get you to feel those feelings, he also helps you work through them and find relief. He never leaves you to deal with your feelings alone and makes sure that you are feeling okay before moving on.

That all helps in the moment, but the biggest benefit of going to this weekend with Joe is that he teaches you how to use these strategies. He walks you through it at the beginning and by the end of the weekend, you know how to take care of yourself, through your Inner Child. That doesn't mean that I am all healed – that may never happen. However now, when I run into

difficulties because of my adoption issues, I am able to use what Joe has taught me to minimize the effects it has on my life.

Although I can't speak for my mom, I believe that our relationship has also benefitted from our weekend together with Joe (and all the other attendees). We have been reunited for 14 years, and have always been very open and honest with each other, but on this weekend we were able to share in each other's healing in a new way. That only helps us move forward.



Kimberley-Ann Jandl

"If you try to get rid of fear and anger without knowing their meaning,
they will grow stronger and return." ~ Deepak Chopra

I found my healing weekend with Joe, and my friends that have been hurt by adoption, to be very profound. I felt quite emotional as Joe led us through the various exercises designed to help us get in touch with our feelings and with our Inner Child. Although I don't always find it easy to make a Feeling Statement on the spot, it certainly puts you in touch with exactly how you are feeling at the moment, i.e. mad, sad, glad, etc., and once you identify your *feeling of the moment*, you can then deal with it, either by talking about it or journaling.

I came away from that weekend with a personal commitment to:

1) **Journal my thoughts often ~ ideally, every day.** To date, I have done just that and have found it so helpful in dealing with the anxiety and pain that I live with regarding the 40+ years I missed with my son. I use my journal as a place to vent my sadness and anger when I feel he has stepped back from our relationship from time to time and I also use my journal to celebrate my happiness when I've had a nice conversation or visit with him. In my journal I also started to keep a Gratitude List, a Grief List and an Anger List, and at the moment I'm happy to say that my Gratitude List is much longer than my Grief or Anger lists.

2) **Do my Inner Child Work every day.** At first it felt very awkward but at some point during the weekend, I could feel the exercise beginning to work and I was actually connecting with my Inner Child. I love my Inner Child and I feel so sad for what she

went through, all alone and at such a young age, but I do now know that the key to helping myself on this endless journey of healing is to keep in constant contact with her. Simply put, we need each other.



Although I have so much in my life to be grateful for, and I am very grateful, the pain of losing my son to adoption will stay with me forever. That being said, I now know that because of the various healing workshops I've attended, my endless reading on the subject of adoption, and surrounding myself with and talking to people that are aware of the pain that comes with adoption, I am in a much better place than I was three years ago when my son found me. I am learning how to deal with my grief and it's one day at a time.

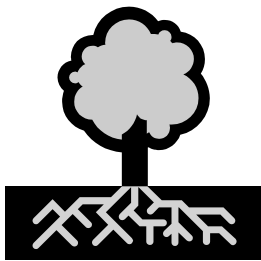
Thank you Joe for all that you do in the name of adoption healing and thank you to my friends at the healing workshop for all your sharing, understanding and support. As I've said to some of the others, I miss the comfort of our group from the healing weekend.

Patricia Buchanan

"A wonderful emotion to get things moving when one is stuck is anger. It was anger more than anything else that had set me off, roused me into productivity and creativity." ~ Mary Garden

"There's nothing wrong with anger provided you use it constructively."

~ Wayne Dyer



Forget Me Not Booth at the *Finding Your Roots* Genealogical Seminar, October 2013

Gail Davies and I enjoyed hosting a FMNFS booth for the second year at the annual Finding Your Roots Seminar at the Surrey Family History Centre. The booths were open primarily during the lunch hour so both Gail and I were able to attend a couple of the genealogy classes on Ireland and DNA. I always get a kick out of Eunice Robinson of the BC Genealogical Society—she explained the reason behind ‘non-compliance’ when 19th century civil registration of births began by comparing it to people’s resistance to BC Hydro’s Smart Meter program.

We received \$11 in donations for extra AC newsletters and we gave out brochures. We answered questions about the Society, adoption issues in

general and were able to suggest further resources. I felt we really helped some people. I’ve been using autosomal “Family finder” DNA testing for my own family genealogy so I was able to recommend it to some visitors, especially those who cannot obtain original birth certificates or whose fathers are unknown. There is a slim chance of finding a close relative this way, since it only works if a lost relative also takes the test, but I think it is worth doing now that prices have dropped.

A few people seemed genuinely interested in attending our support groups. It’s always worthwhile getting exposure so people know we exist. .

~ Amy Newman

Anger Free

by Bernadette Rymer Oct. 2013

ADOPTION loss. Anger deep. Always present. Agonized weep.

No rights. No hope. No help to love and to nurture. No reason to hope for a brighter future.

Give us your baby ~ you are no good. Get on with your life. Grief not understood.

Engraved in grief. Energy sapped. Everyone quiet. Ever entrapped.

Rally to normalcy. Raise other children. Realize your sin. Repent ~ anew begin.

FORGET ME NOT ~ we cry with each other. Free at last to love as a mother.

Reunion. Regression. Regain my life. Reconnect with myself. Relieve my strife.

Endurable now is my sorrow so tart. Enough strength and hope ~ a new life to start.

Ever thankful to all my FMN friends. Even in absence, your love never ends.

Rants and Rage

by Evelyn Morin

They took my first son and gave him away
To a middle aged couple more able to pay
For all of his needs, to raise him up right
My emptiness swapped for their personal delight.
They had all the joy of each day with my son
Leaving me drained, wondering what I had done
To reap such contempt, coming into my life
For thirty long years in pain and in strife
But secrets come back to those in denial
A horrified elder, a lost mother's smile.
The phone call to say, "Hello, I'm your son
I never judged you for what then was done."
The floodgates broke open, with rivers of tears
Mourning the loss of the thirty long years.
Anger then surfaced, directed at those
Who made swift decisions, my boiling point rose
Until I exploded in rants and in rage
Many observed my behaviour as strange.
My heart split wide open, embracing my child
As family believed I'd truly gone wild.
But time passed and memories were building to stay
My heart healed, the anger just melted away.
There's nothing as healing as finding your soul
A successful reunion to again make you whole.
I cherish each moment I still have to live
My son in my life, all my love I will give
And thank the Creator providing my joy
He brought back my love, my sweet baby boy!

Birthday Glance

by BGN – Baby Girl Nelson
(Author Stephanie McCaskill)

Sitting at this desk
Start to wonder how
It would have felt to see you
And hold you close right now

Looking out the window
Begin to ponder what
Your smooth skin must have felt like
Your sleeping eyes when shut

Writing on this paper
My mind just asks why
I didn't get to meet you
But only that one time

Starring at the calendar
Only a few days until
That oh so fateful birthdate
When you followed God's will

Mom, what were you thinking
As you lay to have a child
Knowing you would leave her
And never see her smile

Mom, How were you feeling
When pains of labor came
Were those tears of hurt
Knowing she had no name

Mom, How did you handle
When the nurse said to you
Do you want to hold her?
Mom, What did you do?

Mom, How did you take
That long trip back home
Knowing she was there
Crying just to know

Just to know your smell
Like all newborns do
Just to hear that heartbeat
Of the one who carried you

Oh so many questions
Answers remain bare
A few days until that birthdate
Only you and I were there

Each year I remember
That you saw my face
Unsure if you held me
Or gave me an embrace

But I know you saw me
And I know I saw you too
Your picture looks familiar
Your eyes were sad and blue

But that one glance you gave me
On that cold December day
Has been a sense of comfort
To help me on the way

Last question Mom, I promise
Will you hold me now
Will you stay forever
From your daughter- Older now

One more mom, I'm sorry
So many things to say
As that date approaches
I wonder everyday

Mommy, were you happy
Did you think I was better off
No, don't answer that one
Reminds me of the loss

Thank you mom for listening
Most important that I say
Mommy I love you forever
From your daughter: on her birthday

LEAN ON ME

Telephone/E-mail Support List



Reunited Adoptees:

Cecelia Reekie (cecelia_r@telus.net) (604) 857-2125
 Betty Anderson (bettboop@telus.net) (604) 531-4074
 Dan Carson (604) 557-0230
 (ariete_132@hotmail.com)
 Marnie Tetz (604) 535-4434
 (marnietetz@shaw.ca)
 Kimberley-Ann Jandl – Abbotsford, BC (604) 852-9663
 (kajandl@yahoo.ca)
 Judy Lanyon- Courtenay, BC (250) 338-2429
 (juriah@shaw.ca)
 Leanne Neighbour – Kamloops, BC (250) 374-0990
 (neighbourhoodz@shaw.ca)
 Lynn Carrier- Edmonton, AB (780) 455-8528
 (carrierlynn@hotmail.com)

Reunited with Siblings:

Michael Hodgson (778) 395-0206
 (tiggerboots@shaw.ca)

Reunited Birth Parents:

Nancy Kato (katosan@telus.net) (604) 777-2920
 Susan Wiesendahl (604) 275-3243
 (susanwiesendahl@yahoo.ca)
 Alice McKinnon – Chilliwack, BC (604) 858-9970
 (chkekray@shaw.ca)
 John Post - Castlegar, BC (250) 365-5991
 Diane Herbert – Abbotsford, BC (604) 870-1821
 (dalendi@shaw.ca)
 Bernadette Rymer - Ashcroft, BC (250) 453-2360
 (bjrymer@telus.net)
 Kathy Chambers (604) 541-6267
 (chattycats@telus.net)

Searching Step-Adoptee:

Edith Archibald (604) 583-7792
 (eearchibald@shaw.ca)

Interested Professionals:

Judy Archer, MSW, RSW, (250) 758-1275
 Counselor and Consultant in Adoption
 (judyarcher@shaw.ca)
 Lee Crawford, M.Ed. R.C.C. (604) 875-9957
 (leecrawford@shaw.ca)
 John Thomas - Quesnel, BC (250) 992-5688
 Christine M. Gatzke, M.Ed., CPAC/ARC
 Psychotherapist (306) 352-4069
 (christine.lachaine@clc-apathtohealing.ca)
 J. Amy Newman, Newman Research Services
 Genealogist/People Finder, Burnaby, BC
 (info@nrsfind.com) 1-877-521-3463 (604) 521-3463

Genetic Attraction:

Anne Tasko, M.A. R.C.C. (250) 721-5995
 (anntasko@shaw.ca)

This is a peer support service.

Please contact our office if you wish to be included in the
 LEAN ON ME Support List.

Forget Me Not Family Society

Support Groups



The FMNFS holds three support groups a month, for adoptees, birth/natural/first parents, adoptive parents and those in a supportive role:

Cloverdale, B.C. meets the first Thursday of each month.

September through June from 6:30 - 8:30 pm.

Cloverdale Public Library 2nd floor

5642-176 A Street, Cloverdale, B.C.

Contact Marnie Tetz (marnietetz@shaw.ca) or 604-535-4434.

New Westminster, B.C. meets the second Tuesday of each month

year-round from 7 - 9 pm. New Westminster Public Library 2nd

floor, 716 - 6th Ave, New Westminster, B.C.

Contact Nancy Kato (katosan@telus.net) or 604-777-2920.

Kamloops, B.C. Interior Support Group meets once a month

(days and times vary). For information please contact Bernadette

Rymer at (bjrymer@telus.net) or 1-250-453-2360.

Other Support Groups

Vancouver, BC: The Adoptees Association holds a discussion group for adopted adults the third Tuesday of each month starting at 7 pm at the Rhizome Cafe, 317 East Broadway (near Main Street). Please contact Catherine at (katiesue@shaw.ca) or visit www.adopteesassociation.ca for more information.

Please note that the "Other Support Groups"
 do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of FMNFS.
 They are listed above for your information only.

Adoption Circles is Your Newsletter ~ Your Voice!

Our quarterly newsletter is created and produced by volunteers. Tell us your story. Editorial support is available. Send to <bjrymer@telus.net> or by mail c/o the Society.

Issue	Topic	Submission Deadline	Distribution
Fall AC 67	Write From the Heart	November 30, 2013	December 21
Winter AC 68	(open to suggestions!)	January	February

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## Have you renewed your MEMBERSHIP?



Membership to the **Forget Me Not Family Society** includes:

- ✓ Subscription to **Adoption Circles**, a quarterly publication
- ✓ Reduction in workshop fees
- ✓ Information on books and support groups

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Province/State \_\_\_\_\_

Postal/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Membership \$30.00/year  
 Couples Membership \$50.00/year  
 International Membership \$50.00/year  
 Corporate Membership \$65.00/year

Please send cheque payable to the  
 Forget Me Not Family Society  
 #102-1860 Southmere Cres. E.,  
 Surrey, BC V4A 6Y7

Residents of the U.S. please send  
 U.S. funds

Birth Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Adoptee \_\_\_\_\_ Adoptive Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Sibling \_\_\_\_\_ Reunited \_\_\_\_\_

Prospective Adoptive Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Adoption Professional \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Change of Address \_\_\_\_\_