

ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



BEYOND THE HAPPINESS: SHEDDING LIGHT ON POST-ADOPTION DEPRESSION



What's Inside ?

10 CHALLENGING ASPECTS OF ADOPTIVE PARENTING



Watch

Adoptive parents Fiona and Neil talk about their experience adopting a sibling group of older children. They share how they overcame post-adoption depression with the support of their social worker.



Read

This article from the National Council for Adoption explains that post-adoption depression is more common than is talked about. Left unaddressed, it can lead to long-term struggles for both the parent and the child.



Listen

Dr. Jane Aronson speaks on the Creating a Family Podcast about post-adoption depression including risk factors, symptoms, and treatment. She normalizes PAD by providing information on how common it actually is.

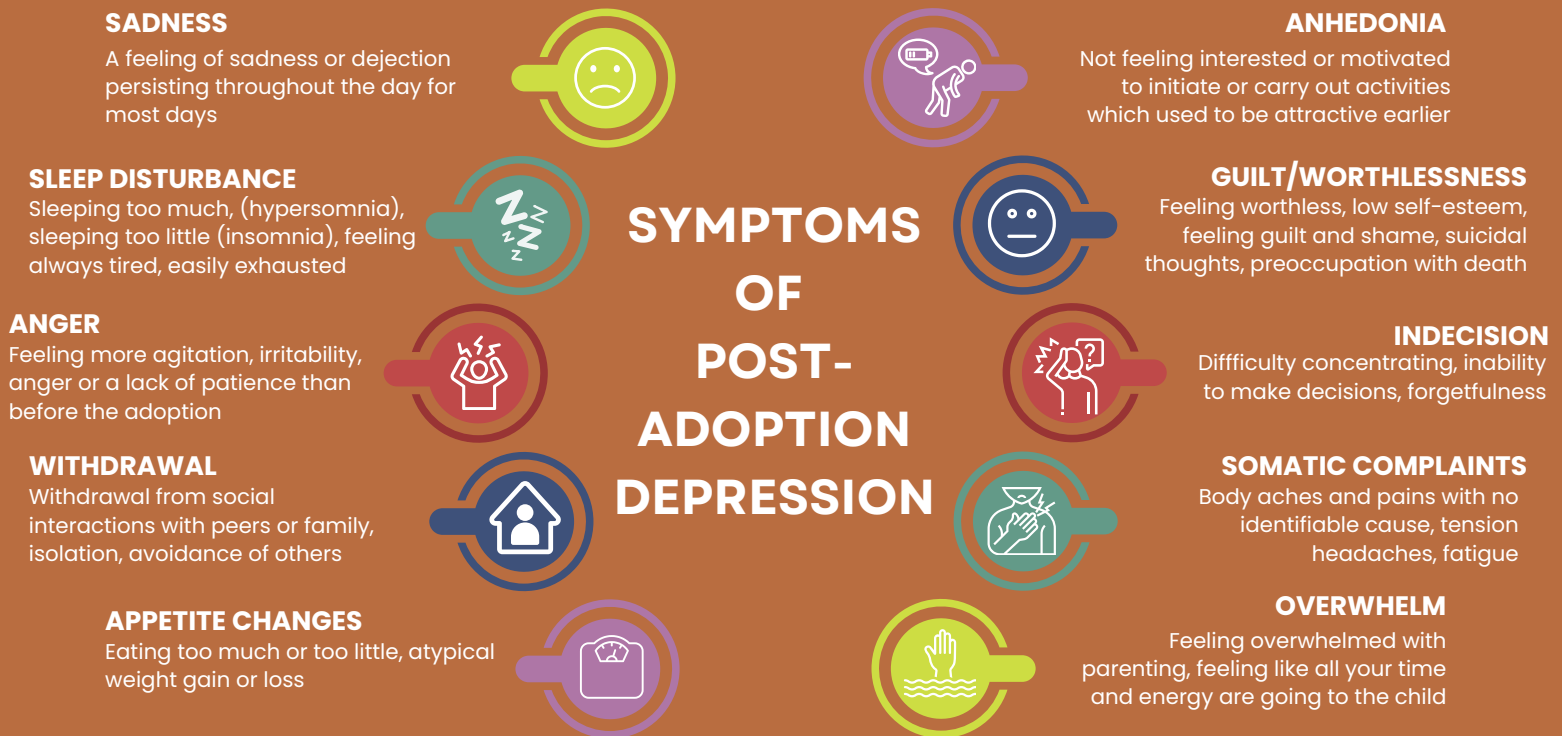
- 1 Attachment difficulties
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- 9 Navigating identity
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WHAT IS POST ADOPTION DEPRESSION (PAD)?

“The term has been around since 1995, although it’s still relatively unknown outside of adoption circles. PADS, which can affect parents of any gender after an adoption, goes way beyond the normal nervousness many new parents feel. It’s natural to be daunted by the gravity of caring for a child with whom you’ve been entrusted, but what...adoptive parents report experiencing goes beyond that.

Like postpartum depression in parents who give birth, post-adoption depression has symptoms that include sadness, anxiety, panic, intense fatigue, and debilitating feelings of inadequacy. PADS is believed to affect somewhere between ten and 32% of adoptive parents. And research shows it affects adoptive parents of all genders.”

Credit: Post Adoption Depression is a Problem We Don't Talk About Enough



Risk Factors for Post-Adoption Depression in Adults

“Many risk factors lead to the development of depression in adoptive parents after their child comes into their home. Adoptive parents place a lot of pressure on themselves, especially if their child comes from a difficult background. The extra pressure leads to extra stress and unrealistic expectations. These emotions become feelings of shame and guilt if the parents cannot live up to their idealized view of parenthood. This pressure, combined with many adoptive parents not forming an immediate bond with their child, creates a recipe for depression.”

Credit: Post Adoption Depression in Adoptive Parents

Reframing Expectations

EXPECTATIONS OF SELF

~~"I will have control of this process."~~

"I will do what I can to move this process along, but also realize that some steps are out of my control."

~~"I have to be the World's Best Parent."~~

"I will be the best parent I can be and allow myself grace for mistakes."

EXPECTATIONS OF THE CHILD

~~"My child will be as happy as I am."~~

"My child will need time to adjust and become familiar with me. My child may be processing losses and trauma, and I need to make them feel safe."

~~"My child will respond to my parenting style."~~

"I may need to meet my child's needs differently than I am used to. I need to become familiar with the needs they bring to our family."

EXPECTATIONS OF FAMILY/FRIENDS

~~"My family and friends will understand that my motivation and need to parent is the same as another's."~~

"My family and friends may not understand why I chose to build my family through adoption. I need to process this decision and feel comfortable with it."

EXPECTATIONS OF SOCIETY

~~"Society will understand my decision as an adoptive parent and our family's boundaries."~~

"I will rehearse what I will say to others when stopped in public, especially if we are a conspicuous family. I will ensure that my family's and my child's privacy are supported, and that my child is not treated or referred to as a commodity."

~~"Adoption professionals are there to get me a child and a license to parent."~~

"There may be events, such as a placement that falls through, that are outside of the control of the adoption professional. I need to consider what their role is and what my emotional needs are, and whether these are congruent and realistic."

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"Reframing Parental Expectations" builds on the theory of parental postadoption depression that depressive symptoms experienced by adoptive mothers and fathers may be associated with unmet and unrealistic expectations. Our cognitive processes are important to examine, and the thoughts we hold are at times precursors to our emotions and behaviors. By reframing these expectations, we allow ourselves to refocus our energies in new and positive directions.



Understanding PAD

Publication

Karen Foli, PhD and the National Council for Adoption present a thoughtful and caring research based perspective on post-adoption depression. In addition to hope, she offers practical steps for dealing with this often overlooked issue in adoption. [Read more...](#)



Adoptive Parents on Adoption Support

5 minute video

BBC's "The One Show" presents this open discussion of an adoptive parent's struggle with post-adoption depression. The parents explain how they made it through and what helped most. [Watch here...](#)



PAD: Causes & Prevention

60 minute listen

Adoption medicine specialist, Dr. Jane Aronson, explains post-adoption depression including statistics, symptoms, and treatment options. She also discusses some of the risk factors that may contribute to post-adoption depression. [Listen here...](#)



WORKS CITED

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Need additional support? Contact our post adoption team!

