



ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

DEPRESSION AND MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES IN ADOPTEEES



What's Inside ?

6 THINGS ADOPTIVE PARENTS CAN DO TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH



Listen

Features discussions among adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents about the mental health aspects of adoption, emphasizing the need for adoption-competent therapy and open conversations.



Read

Explores how adoption can impact mental health, discussing issues like attachment disorders, identity struggles, and increased risks of depression and anxiety among adoptees.



Watch

A video resource discussing the mental health effects associated with adoption, providing personal stories and expert opinions.

- 1 Start Honest Conversations
- 2 Normalize Mental Health Support
- 3 Educate Yourself
- 4 Support Their Identity Development
- 5 Promote Healthy Habits
- 6 Get Support For Yourself

Learn more in our newsletter below!





6 THINGS ADOPTIVE PARENTS CAN DO TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH

You don't have to be a mental health expert—you just have to be a safe place.

Start Honest Conversations

Let your child know their feelings are valid. Be available to listen without rushing to fix or dismiss. Say things like, "That sounds hard. I'm really glad you told me."

01



Normalize Mental Health Support

Depression is treatable. Finding a qualified therapist—ideally one with experience in trauma and adoption—can make all the difference.

02



Educate Yourself

Understanding the lifelong impact of adoption trauma can help you respond with more empathy and patience. Organizations like [C.A.S.E.](#) offer resources and therapist directories

03



SCROLL FOR MORE!



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Support Their Identity Development

Be proactive in helping your child explore their cultural or birth heritage. Create space for questions, even if you don't have all the answers.



04

Promote Healthy Habits

Sleep, exercise, balanced meals, creative outlets, and screen-time boundaries all support mental well-being.

05



Get Support for Yourself

Parenting a child with depression—especially one who has experienced trauma—can be emotionally draining. Don't hesitate to seek guidance or community for yourself too.

06



Just A Reminder!



You're Not Alone!

Adoption doesn't cause depression—but the grief, loss, and identity issues tied to adoption can intensify the emotional weight teens already carry. The good news? Healing is possible, especially when parents show up with empathy, curiosity, and consistency.

If your child is struggling, don't wait. Trust your gut, ask questions, and reach out for help. Your support can change the course of their life.



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WHY DO TEENS GET DEPRESSED?

There is a lot going on beneath the surface of a teen's life. While hormonal changes, mood swings, and growing pains play a role, depression is often rooted in deeper experiences and pressures. Some of the most common contributors to depression in teens include:



TRAUMA AND ABUSE

Up to 43% of teen girls have experienced significant trauma, with about 6% diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This trauma may result from abuse, neglect, or other painful experiences, whether at home or elsewhere.



PRESSURE TO BE PERFECT

Academic and extracurricular expectations can weigh heavily on teens. Whether it's pressure to earn top grades, make the team, or impress others, perfectionism can leave a child feeling like they're never good enough.



BULLYING

Nearly 1 in 5 high school students report being bullied. This might take the form of exclusion, harassment, or cyberbullying—any of which can impact a teen's self-esteem and mental health.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can help teens connect—but it also fosters unrealistic comparisons. The pressure to look, act, or live a certain way online can leave adolescents feeling inadequate or anxious about how they're perceived.



GENETICS

Depression sometimes runs in families, though it's not always predictable. A teen may inherit a genetic predisposition, but environment and life circumstances often play a more direct role in triggering symptoms.



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ADOPTTEES & DEPRESSION:

Understanding the Risks and How Parents Can Help



Parenting a teenager is challenging. Adolescence brings emotional highs and lows, identity exploration, peer pressure, and academic stress. Depression is common and can affect any teen. However, for those with a history of trauma or loss, like many adoptees, the risk is even higher.

WHY ADOPTTEES MAY BE AT GREATER RISK

All teens are vulnerable to depression—but adoptees face additional layers of emotional complexity. Numerous studies show that adopted individuals are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges than their non-adopted peers. ([Source](#))

③ Identity Confusion

Adoptees may struggle with questions like “Who am I?” or “Why was I adopted?” These often intensify during adolescence, leaving them feeling isolated or misunderstood.

① Early Separation and Loss

Even if adopted at birth, losing a birth parent profoundly impacts attachment and emotional development.

④ Feeling “Different”

Being the only adoptee or part of a transracial family can lead to feelings of otherness, especially if differences aren’t acknowledged.

② Institutional or Foster Care Trauma

Many adoptees, particularly those from international or foster care, have faced neglect, inconsistent care, or multiple placements before adoption.

⑤ Disenfranchised Grief

Society often sees adoption as purely positive. But for adoptees, the story is more complicated. When their loss isn’t recognized or validated, it can make it harder to express sadness or seek help.



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Recognizing the Signs of Depression in Kids and Teens

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Symptoms of depression don't always look the same in every child. In younger children, it may show up as irritability, clinginess, or frequent physical complaints. In teens, depression often appears as withdrawal, self-criticism, or risky behavior.

Signs to Watch For:

- Persistent sadness or irritability
- Withdrawal from friends or family
- Changes in appetite or sleep
- Fatigue or low energy
- Trouble concentrating
- Declining school performance
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Talking about death or suicide

If these symptoms last more than two weeks or begin to affect daily life, it's time to seek support.



**JOIN US MAY 28TH AT 12PM CST
FOR A LIVE WEBINAR HOSTED BY:**



ADOPTION AND MENTAL HEALTH: UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Foster and adopted children often face mental health challenges due to trauma, separation, and loss. Professionals and caregivers need the skills to support these complex needs. This webinar covers common mental health issues in adopted children, trauma-informed treatments, and strategies for both medical and holistic interventions.



THE SPEAKER: SUSAN K. TAYLOR

Susan Katherine Taylor, Piedmont Coordinator for CRAFFT at Radford University since 2011, volunteered with Child Care Aware of Virginia as Board President. She holds a bachelor's in Psychology and Sociology from Davidson College and a master's in Child & Family Studies from the University of Tennessee.



REGISTER NOW



HELPFUL RESOURCES

These resources collectively shed light on the complex mental health challenges associated with adoption, emphasizing the importance of understanding, support, and appropriate therapeutic interventions for adoptees.

- **What Are the Mental Health Effects of Being Adopted? – Verywell Mind** – Explores how adoption can impact mental health, discussing issues like attachment disorders, identity struggles, and increased risks of depression and anxiety among adoptees.
- **Adoption and Mental Illness – Psychiatric Times** – Highlights research indicating that adoptees may have higher rates of certain mental health disorders, emphasizing the need for awareness and support.
- **Adopted Children Often Face Mental Health Struggles as Young Adults – Claudia Black Center** – Discusses the challenges adopted children may encounter as they transition into adulthood, including identity issues and emotional difficulties.
- **Adoptees and the Real Mental Health Challenges They Face – Identity Learning** – Examines the unique mental health challenges adoptees face, such as feelings of loss, identity confusion, and the importance of acknowledging these experiences.
- **Depression in Children – News Medical** – Provides an overview of depression in children, which can be relevant for understanding mental health issues in adopted children.
- **Adoption Advocate No. 124 – National Council For Adoption** – Offers insights into adoption practices and policies, with potential implications for the mental well-being of adoptees.
- **Mental Health & Adoption – Adoption Unfiltered Podcast** – Features discussions among adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents about the mental health aspects of adoption, emphasizing the need for adoption-competent therapy and open conversations.
- **Shining a Light on the Mental Health Struggles of the Adopted – 1A** – Explores the often-overlooked mental health challenges faced by adoptees, highlighting personal stories and expert insights.
- **Podcast: Adoption and Mental Health Issues – Psych Central** – Discusses the psychological impacts of adoption, including issues like abandonment and trust, and the importance of acknowledging adoptees' experiences.
- **YouTube Video on Adoption and Mental Health** – A video resource discussing the mental health effects associated with adoption, providing personal stories and expert opinions.

Need additional support? Contact our post adoption team!



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