



## EVIDENCE SEARCH RESULTS

<b>Question/subject of request:</b>	<p>How can cognitive analytic therapy address issues which have arisen from the experiencing adoption? Look at changes to understanding of adoption from the adoptees perspective. EG From early formulations that it was only ever "a good thing"/ babies can't remember to later understanding that it is a prime trauma experienced by the baby.</p> <p>Look at any research which unpicks early care differentiating mothers rather than "primary caregiver" When was this term first used? Note examples of literature which interchanges mother with primary caregiver.</p> <p>Any literature exploring a difference between attachment and bonding? Look at any research showing in utero bonding between mother and baby? And in days after birth. Look at research drawing on common behaviours/presentations of adopted (children) and adults (mainly) Look at what therapeutic interventions have been offered to adopted adults and evaluated.</p> <p>Is there any data revealing how many patients in mental health services who present with other symptoms and diagnoses (eating disorders, anxiety and depression, relational problems, OCD, personality disorder diagnoses etc) have lived through adoption?</p>
<b>Date requested:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
<b>Date completed:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
<b>Compiled by:</b>	Laetitia Delaleuf

### CITING THIS SEARCH

If you reference this search in any paper, publication or presentation, please let us know.

The citation format is:

- Delaleuf, L., (2025). *Evidence summary: understanding adoptees experiences and trauma* Taunton, UK: Somerset Foundation Trust Knowledge and Library Services.

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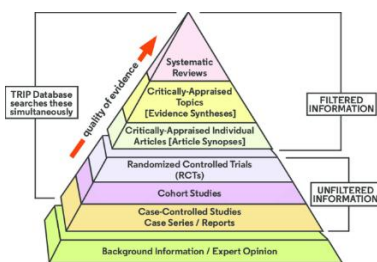


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The design of the study and the endpoints measured affect the strength of the evidence.

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**Contents** (click to jump to each section):

- [GENERAL](#)
- [ADOPTEE'S PERSPECTIVES](#)
- [MOTHERHOOD AND PRIMARY CAREGIVER](#)
- [ATTACHMENT AND BONDING](#)
- [TRAUMA AND INTERVENTIONS](#)
- [DATA](#)
- [TRANSRACIAL AND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTEES](#)

**Summary of search results:**

*This summary may have been generated in part or in full by AI.*

General Summary:

The trajectories of adoptees vary significantly, making it challenging to identify commonalities ([Field, J. and Pond, R. 2018](#)). Several factors to consider in international adoptions are the age of adoption, care from birth until adoption, pre and post-birth work with adoptees' carers, social environment of carers or racial aspects. Some research has shown that a large majority of adoptees do not develop behavioural difficulties ([Feigelman, W. 2001](#); [Juffer, F. and van IJzendoorn, M., 2007](#)). However, other studies show that adoptees are statistically worse off than non-adoptees ([Lehto, K. et al. 2020](#); [Melero, S. and Sanchez-Sandoval, Y. 2017](#); [Ligier F. et al. 2022](#); [Van der Vegt, E. et al. 2009](#)). As Grant, M., Rushton, A. and Simmonds, J. (2016) explained (in the case of international adoptees) conclusions cannot be extrapolated to all adoptees.

Some of the difficulties experienced by adoptees are: suffering from loss, separation, abandonment, trust, betrayal, rejection, self-worth, grief, and identity development ([Guittard, J., 2022](#), [Feeney, J.A., Passmore, N. L. and Peterson, C. C., 2007](#), [Borders, L.D., Penny, J. M. and Portnoy, F. 2000](#)), building and maintaining close relationships. According to Borders, L.D., Penny, J. M. and Portnoy, F. (2000), these difficulties can emerge during important life events or transitions such as parenthood ([Edwards, C. et al. 2023](#); [Greco, O., Rosnati, R. and Ferrari, L., 2015](#)), romantic relationships ([Groncki, M.A.A., 2010 Thesis](#)) or leaving carers.





This shows that adoption is a lifelong process that doesn't end with the legal act of adoption ([Hogan, C.M., Grotevant, H.D. and Wang D., 2023](#)) highlight this in their introduction and emphasis on the dynamics of adoptive families to understand adoptees adjustments.

Other noticeable themes are:

- transracial adoption ([Odenstad, A. et al. 2008](#) and research in particular on discrimination ([Ferrari, L. et al. 2022](#), [White, E. et al. 2022](#), [Presseau, C., DeBlaere, C. and Luu, L.P. 2019](#), [Arnold, T. et al. 2016](#)).
- children's adversities and early deprivations before adoption and the impact on mental health ([Sonuga-Barke, E et al. 2017](#), [Teyhan, A., Wijedasa, D. and Macleod, J. 2018](#), [Nadeem, E. et al. 2017](#), [Kennedy, M. et al. 2024](#)) The possibility of genetic factors ([Lehto, K. et al., 2020](#)).
- The question of openness. How opening up about adoption changes relationships ([Grigoropoulos, I. 2022](#))

For the question around motherhood and primary caregiver: it seems that the primary concept of attachment was developed by John Bowlby in the late 60s ([volume 1 loss and attachment](#)) focusing more on the primary caregiver regardless of biological attachment. This is something further developed by fathers as primary caregivers or 'stay-at-home dads'.

Additionally, this question of attachment can also be developed further on in life with contact with birth parents ([Lo, A.Y., Grotevant, H.D. and Wrobel, G.M. 2023](#); [Farr, R.H., Grant-Marsney, H.A. and Grotevant, H.D., 2014](#); [Feeney, J.A., Passmore, N. L. and Peterson, C. C., 2007](#)).

For the question about attachment and bonding: Ettenberger M. et al ([2021](#)) explain the differences between attachment and bonding. Attachment is focused on relationship construction between the infant and the primary caregiver (whoever the person may be). In contrast, bonding refers to the emotions and behaviours of the parents towards the baby. This theory was primarily developed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth for attachment theory and by Marshall H. Klaus for bonding theory.

Another important theme in the literature is heritage and the impacts of genetic and cultural belonging on later life ([Williams, A. et al., 2024](#); [Grant, M., Rushton, A., and Simmonds, J., 2016](#); [Lutz, K.T., 2011](#)).

Regarding data, there is no specific data in Mental Health about adoptees. However, the charity Adoption UK published some data ([2024](#)).

Relevant extract: "While 86% agreed that peer support was important, only 56% felt confident they could access this. Respondents overwhelmingly disagreed that adoption services and wider services (including health and mental health) were meeting the needs of adult adoptees. Barriers to accessing support included a lack of professionals with adoptee-centred expertise (including lived experience) and high costs"

From this barometer, a table extract is based on 246 adoptees respondents.





Assessment of Lived Experience	Score				
	UK	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
I feel confident that suitable, professional support would be available to me when obtaining personal, historical records from the relevant authorities	40% ➔	39%	40%*	41%	50%*
I would feel confident approaching professional services for support with tracing or reconnecting with my birth relatives	44% ⬇️	43%	22%*	38%	60%*
The counselling I was offered as part of tracing or reconnecting with my birth relatives was attuned to my needs as an adopted person	49% ⬇️	53%*	N	N	N
I know where I can access counselling, therapeutic services and mental health support that is attuned to my needs as an adopted person	25% ➔	24%	33%*	26%	30%*
I feel confident that a range of appropriate therapeutic services are available to me as an adopted person	18% ➔	17%	33%*	18%	15%*
I feel confident that I can access formal and informal peer support networks if I wish to do so	55% ⬆️	56%	78%*	42%	55%*

Interventions on adults: unsurprisingly, most interventions found are for children. However, this handbook may shed more light on adolescents and young adults: [Handbook on the clinical treatment of adopted adolescents and young adults. 2024. New York, NY: Routledge](#), with specifically this chapter: DEEG, C.F., 2024: Notes on the psychoanalytic treatment of the adopted person.

Additionally, research was published in counselling, specifically by [Branco, S.F., Kim, J. and Newton, G. 2024](#) has developed the Adoptee Consciousness Model (ACM) for transracial adoptees, and it is a framework based on awareness of 'oppressive structural and sociopolitical factors'. I have also added two counselling resources for adult adoptees.

I have also focused on adult adoptees.

I hope this is helpful. Please do let us know if you need any further information.



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## GENERAL

### [Social relationships in adults who were adopted following institutional deprivation](#)

**Authors:** Kennedy, Mark;Edwards, Christopher;Kreppner, Jana;Knights, Nicky;Kovshoff, Hanna;Maughan, Barbara and Sonuga-Barke, Edmund J. S.

**Publication Date:** October 1 ,2024

**Journal:** Journal of Social and Personal Relationships

**Abstract:** We used qualitative methods to explore and characterise the social experiences and difficulties encountered by young adults exposed to profound early deprivation. To do so, we interviewed young adults and their adoptive parents (N = 18) from the English and Romanian Adoptees study, about their social lives. Participants were keen to describe not only the challenges they faced but also adaptive responses. A semantic/descriptive thematic analysis revealed that the young adults strongly desired social relationships but struggled to navigate social norms, resulting in frustration and frequent loss of relationships. This was accompanied by strong feelings of loss and rejection, all of which were perceived to have a negative impact upon self-esteem and mental health. Adaptive strategies included the fostering of casual friendships with older individuals and seeking employment with strong social components. Similarities and differences between our findings and the social difficulties experienced by typically developing groups with neurodevelopmental problems, and adopted individuals more generally, are discussed.

### [Adoptive family contexts of adolescent and adult adjustment: Dyadic and systemic approaches](#)

**Author:** Hogan, Christina M., Grotevant, Harold D. and Wang, Dongwei

**Publication Date:** 2023

**Journal:** Journal of Family Psychology.

**Abstract:** This study examines data from 177 adoptive families from the Minnesota/Texas Adoption Research Project, a longitudinal study of families who participated in domestic U.S. infant adoptions. The present study examines family context in relation to parent-child incompatibility and how family context during adolescence is associated with concurrent and later adjustment. Family context variables were hypothesized to predict parents' and their spouses' ratings of incompatibility using actor-partner interdependence models. Varied actor and partner effects of family dysfunction, parent distress, and family stressors on ratings of parent-child incompatibility were found. Using regressions, family context variables were hypothesized to have positive associations with adolescent and adult adjustment. Variables accounted for significant variance in adopted individuals' outcomes when considering symptom type (internalizing, externalizing) and age (adolescence, emerging adulthood), though many variables did not have a significant main effect. Results allow for better understanding of differential associations of family context with adjustment for adopted individuals and families.





**[Birth Family Contact from Childhood to Adulthood: Adjustment and Adoption Outcomes in Adopted Young Adults.](#)**

**Authors:** Lo, Albert Y. H.; Grotevant, Harold D. and Wrobel, Gretchen M.

**Publication Date:** Jul ,2023

**Journal:** International Journal of Behavioral Development

**Abstract:** The current study utilizes four contact trajectory groups, spanning from middle childhood to young adulthood and encompassing three aspects of birth family contact, in predicting psychological adjustment and adoption-related outcomes in adopted young adults. Data come from a longitudinal study of adoptive families in which adopted persons were domestically adopted in infancy by same-race parents in the United States. Adopted young adults in the group characterized by sustained high levels of contact and satisfaction with contact over time ('Extended Contact') displayed lower levels of psychological distress and higher levels of psychological well-being than adopted persons in the group characterized by contact that increased over time but remained limited ('Limited Contact'). Generally, adopted persons within the group characterized by consistent lack of contact ('No Contact') and the group characterized by contact that was initially present but ended ('Stopped Contact') did not differ in distress and well-being from those in the 'Extended Contact' group. No group differences were found on adoption dynamics and identity, however young adults in the 'Extended Contact' group generally reported more positive relationships with their birth mothers than those in the other groups. Findings are discussed in the context of heterogeneity in contact experiences and implications for policy and practice.

**[When the Good Object is also a Thief: A Memoir of Adoption.](#)**

**Authors:** Guittard, Jennifer

**Publication Date:** 2022

**Journal:** Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association

**Abstract:** This contemporary Kleinian memoir explores the possible existence of an intrapsychic, adoption-specific preoedipal triad including child, birth mother, and adoptive mother that can shape the emerging mind. As an intrapsychic construct, the adoption triad comes to exist in the infantile mind, requiring that adoptees contend with four additional part-object maternal representations: a villain (bad birth mother), a victim (good birth mother), a rescuer (good adoptive other), and a thief (bad adoptive mother). The psychic complexities of this possible adoption triad are explored, with an eye to how it might illuminate the psychosocial challenges experienced by some adoptees, including dysregulated behavior, rage, dissociation, and shame. To this end, Bion's ideas regarding presymbolic, nondefensive communication and Winnicott's understanding of use of the object are invoked. Expanding the preoedipal paradigm of adoption to include the possibility of an intrapsychic, adoption-specific maternal triad can enhance our understanding of the psychology of adoption, as well as highlight the need to consider the ways in which internal objects can exist simultaneously in both dyadic and triadic paradigms.

**[Childhood Adoption and Mental Health in Adulthood: The Role of Gene-Environment Correlations and Interactions in the UK Biobank](#)**

**Authors:** Lehto, Kelli; Hägg, Sara; Lu, Donghao; Karlsson, Robert; Pedersen, Nancy L. and Mosing, Miriam A.

**Publication Date:** 2020

**Journal:** Biological Psychiatry

**Abstract:** We explored associations between childhood adoption and mental health-related outcomes in midlife in 243,797 UK Biobank participants (n adopted = 3151). Results: Adoptees were slightly worse off on almost all mental, socioeconomic, and psychosocial measures. Each standard deviation increase in polygenic risk for depressive symptoms, schizophrenia, and neuroticism was associated with 6%, 5%, and 6% increase in the odds of being adopted, respectively. Significant genetic correlations between adoption status and depressive symptoms, major depression, and schizophrenia were observed. No evidence for gene-environment



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interaction between genetic risk and adoption on mental health was found.

Conclusions: The association between childhood adoption and mental health cannot fully be attributed to stressful environments but is partly explained by differences in genetic risk between adoptees and those who have not been adopted (i.e., gene-environment correlation).

### [Psychological adjustment in Spanish young adult domestic adoptees: Mental health and licit substance consumption](#)

**Author:** Sánchez-Sandoval, Yolanda and Melero, Sandra

**Publication Date:** 2019

**Journal:** American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 89, (6) pp.640–653. Educational Publishing Foundation, Educational Publishing Foundation American Orthopsychiatric Association, Inc. Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to analyze the mental health and legal substance consumption (tobacco and alcohol) of young adults ( $n = 134$ ) who were domestically adopted by Spanish families. Young adults showed significantly worse scores on the Symptom Check-List-90-R (Derogatis, 1975) and also more substance use than did the Spanish general population, but fewer difficulties than did the clinical population. On the Global Severity Index (GSI), 65.7% of adoptees were within the normal range, 24.6% were at risk, and 9.7% were within the clinical range. Male adoptees scored higher than expected for the general population on all subscales, whereas female adoptees did not. Age at adoption was not found to have a significant impact on adjustment. However, adopted adults seem to have fewer difficulties than do the clinical population. Despite the higher mean scores in the adult adoptee population, a high percentage of adopted people are within the normal range of what is considered psychologically well adjusted.

### [How adoption affects the experience of adult intimate relationships and parenthood: A systematic review.](#)

**Authors:** Field, Julia and Pond, Rachael

**Publication Date:** July 1 ,2018

**Journal:** New Zealand Journal of Counselling

**Abstract:** The aim of this article is to systematically review the evidence about the nature and quality of adult adoptees' intimate relationships with their partners and children. After systematically searching most major article databases and "hand" searching major adoption journals, the review included 15 quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method studies that fulfilled the selection criteria (domestically adopted adult participants over the age of 18; published and grey literature since 1997). Following data extraction and synthesis, themes emerged across the literature suggesting that being adopted is influential in intimate relationships for some adoptees, with complexities of attachment, anxiety, and ambivalence characterising their relationships with partners and experiences of parenting across the lifespan. Methodological and sampling limitations in the studies preclude application to adoptees generally but rich descriptive data provides useful insights for counsellors who may work therapeutically with this population.

### [Adult psychosocial outcomes of men and women who were looked-after or adopted as children: prospective observational study.](#)

**Authors:** Teyhan, Alison; Wijedasa, Dinithi and Macleod, John

**Publication Date:** 02 08 ,2018

**Journal:** BMJ Open

**Abstract:** Objective: To investigate whether men and women who were looked-after (in public care) or adopted as children are at increased risk of adverse psychological and social outcomes in adulthood. Design, Setting: Prospective observational study using the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children, which recruited pregnant women and their male partners in and around Bristol, UK in the early 1990s. Participants: 8775 women and 3654 men who completed questionnaires at recruitment (mean age: women 29; men 32) and 5 years later. Exposure: Childhood public care



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status: looked-after; adopted; not looked-after or adopted (reference group). Outcomes: Substance use (alcohol, cannabis, tobacco) pre-pregnancy and 5 years later; if ever had addiction; anxiety and depression during pregnancy and 5 years later; if ever had mental health problem; social support during pregnancy; criminal conviction. Conclusions: The needs of those who experience public care as children persist into adulthood. Health and social care providers should recognise this.

### [Mental health and psychological adjustment in adults who were adopted during their childhood: A systematic review](#)

**Authors:** Melero, Sandra and Sánchez-Sandoval, Yolanda

**Publication Date:** -06-01 ,2017

**Journal:** Children and Youth Services Review

**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to systematically review the evidence about mental health and psychological adjustment in adult adoptees. A systematic search was conducted on Web of Science and PsycInfo. The review includes 27 studies that fulfilled the selection criteria (ages between 20 and 40, domestic adoptions and articles published since 1995). Evidence suggests that psychological adjustment in adult adoptees is more unfavourable (with higher levels of depression, anxiety, personality and behavioural disorders and neuroticism) than in non-adoptees. A small group of studies shows similar psychological adjustment of adoptees and non-adoptees. Moreover, there is evidence that the adopted population is quite heterogeneous, involving individual and contextual variables. There are clear diagnostic differences when gender is taken into account. Some family variables (e.g., attachment, parenting styles) emerge as mediating factors of the effects of the adoptive status on psychological adjustment. Other risk and protective factors have been insufficiently studied (e.g., age at the time of adoption), so additional research is needed.

### [Long-Term Effects of Pre-Placement Risk Factors on Children's Psychological Symptoms and Parenting Stress Among Families Adopting Children From Foster Care](#)

**Authors:** Nadeem, Erum;Waterman, Jill;Foster, Jared;Paczkowski, Emilie;Belin, Thomas R. and Miranda, Jeanne

**Publication Date:** -06-01 ,2017

**Journal:** Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

**Abstract:** This exploratory longitudinal study examined behavioral outcomes and parenting stress among families with children adopted from foster care, taking into account environmental and biological risk factors. Child internalizing and externalizing problems and parenting stress were assessed in 82 adopted children and their families at 2 months post-placement, 12 months post-placement, and then yearly until 5 years post-placement. A history of abuse/neglect predicted significantly higher externalizing and internalizing problems at a borderline level of statistical significance. In the initial stages after placement, externalizing problems were significantly higher among children who were 4 years or older at placement versus those who were younger than 4, although differences were no longer significant 5 years post-placement. Statistical trends in parenting stress reflected reduced stress in the first 12 months followed by a plateau for parents who adopted older children and greater stress for parents who adopted younger children. Familiar limitations for observational cohort data apply. Nonetheless, the availability of longitudinal follow-up on a sizable sample of children adopted from foster care adds insight to the psychological dynamics for adoptive families and suggests that families of children adopted from the foster care system may have unique needs for ongoing support around behavioral issues.

### [Child-to-adult neurodevelopmental and mental health trajectories after early life deprivation: the young adult follow-up of the longitudinal English and Romanian Adoptees study.](#)

**Authors:** Sonuga-Barke, Edmund J. S.;Kennedy, Mark;Kumsta, Robert;Knights, Nicky;Golm, Dennis;Rutter, Michael;Maughan, Barbara;Schlotz, Wolff and Kreppner, Jana

**Publication Date:** 04 15 ,2017

**Journal:** Lancet

**Abstract:** The English and Romanian Adoptees study is a longitudinal, natural experiment



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investigation into the long-term outcomes of individuals who spent from soon after birth to up to 43 months in severe deprivation in Romanian institutions before being adopted into the UK. We used developmentally appropriate standard questionnaires, interviews completed by parents and adoptees, and direct measures of IQ to measure symptoms of autism spectrum disorder, inattention and overactivity, disinhibited social engagement, conduct or emotional problems, and cognitive impairment. Interpretation: Notwithstanding the resilience shown by some adoptees and the adult remission of cognitive impairment, extended early deprivation was associated with long-term deleterious effects on wellbeing that seem unsusceptible to years of nurturance and support in adoptive families.

#### [Adult Adoptees as Partners and Parents: The Joint Task of Revisiting the Adoption History](#)

**Authors:** Greco, Ondina; Rosnati, Rosa and Ferrari, Laura

**Publication Date:** 2015

**Journal:** Adoption Quarterly

**Abstract:** The principal aim of the present study is twofold: first, to analyze whether and how parenthood might lead the adoptee and his/her partner to reinterpret the adoption history and, second, to verify whether the attitudes of the two partners concerning adoption are similar or complementary. Thirty-four couples consisting of one adopted and one non-adopted partner, now parents, were interviewed and a graphic instrument, the Double Moon Test, was administered. Results revealed that most couples showed a shared attitude in valorizing both the origin background and the adoptive family. However, in a number of cases a divergent position emerged, highlighting the crucial role of the non-adopted partner in encouraging the adoptee to revisit his/her adoption history. Overall, the practical relevance of the research findings is discussed and future direction of research are suggested.

#### [Adoptees' contact with birth parents in emerging adulthood: the role of adoption communication and attachment to adoptive parents.](#)

**Authors:** Farr, Rachel H.; Grant-Marsney, Holly A. and Grotevant, Harold D.

**Publication Date:** Dec ,2014

**Journal:** Family Process

**Abstract:** This study examined associations among attachment and communication within the adoptive family during adulthood with emerging adult adoptees' experience of birth family contact, in a sample of 167 emerging adults with varied contact with birth family. Results suggest that perceptions of secure parent-child attachment relationships, as well as sensitive and open communication with adoptive parents about adoption, continue to be important for emerging adult adoptees and lead to greater satisfaction for adoptees with birth parent contact-regardless of whether adoptees actually have birth family contact. In particular, positive family communication about adoption during adulthood was predictive of satisfaction with birth parent contact. Limitations and implications are discussed.

#### [Contact with birth parents: Differential psychological adjustment for adults adopted as infants](#)

**Authors:** Curtis, Reagan and Pearson, Frances

**Publication Date:** 2010

**Journal:** Journal of Social Work

**Abstract:** Adults adopted as infants (N = 130) in the United States were surveyed to determine the degree to which they experienced psychological effects of adoption during adolescence and adulthood and the relationship between psychological effects and whether or not they had contact with their birth parents. Findings: Those who were in contact reported more psychological issues than those who were not in contact. A qualitative analysis of comments made by the respondents demonstrated differences in the types of issues associated with difficulties depending upon whether they had contact with their birth parents or not. Applications: The results are discussed in light of the literature on searching behaviors among adopted individuals.





**[A Comparative Study of Adopted and Nonadopted Women's Attachment Within Romantic Relationships](#)** [please note: this is a thesis so caution should be made on the information provided]

**Authors:** Groncki, M.A.A.

**Publication Date:** 2010

**Date Retrieved:** Jan 30, 2025

**Abstract:** From a sample of two-hundred-thirty-one women (N=231), one-hundred-twenty-seven adopted women and one-hundred-four women who were not adopted were compared in terms of their attachment style within romantic relationships. Comparisons were also made between adopted women and nonadopted women regarding their parental bonding experiences. Participants completed The Experiences in Close Relationships Measure to assess romantic relationship attachment, The Parental Bonding Instrument to assess experiences of parental behaviors and attitudes during their first sixteen years of life, and a Background Information Questionnaire. Statistical analysis indicated that adopted women experienced a more insecure attachment within their romantic relationships. Statistical analysis also indicated that adopted women reported more negative parental attitudes and behaviors regarding their mutual interactions with their parents during the first sixteen years of their life. Clinical implications are discussed with a particular focus on how clinicians may better serve their adopted clients through having an in-depth understanding of adoption and attachment. Further research is needed to determine the impact of adoption on adult attachment related experiences for adopted persons.

**[Adoption, attachment, and relationship concerns: A study of adult adoptees](#)**

**Authors:** Feeney, Judith A.; Passmore, Nola L. and Peterson, Candida C.

**Publication Date:** 2007

**Journal:** Personal Relationships

**Abstract:** We examined the impact of adoptive status and family experiences on adult attachment security and how attachment predicts relationship outcomes. Adults adopted as infants (N = 144) and a sample of nonadoptees (N = 131) completed measures of attachment security at recruitment and 6 months later; other measures assessed parental bonding and adoptees' reunion experiences (Time 1), and relationship variables (e.g., loneliness, relationship quality; Time 2). Insecurity was higher for adoptees and those reporting negative childhood relationships with parents. For adoptees only, recent relationship difficulties also predicted insecurity. Attachment dimensions were more important than adoptive status in predicting relationship variables and mediated the effects of adoptive status. The results support the utility of attachment theory in understanding adoptees' relationship concerns.

**[Adoptees do not lack self-esteem: A meta-analysis of studies on self-esteem of transracial, international, and domestic adoptees](#)**

**Authors:** Juffer, F. and Van Ijzendoorn, M.H.

**Publication Date:** 2007

**Journal:** Psychological Bulletin.

**Abstract:** Do adopted children show lower self-esteem than nonadopted peers, and do transracial adoptees show lower self-esteem than same-race adoptees? In a series of meta-analyses, the authors found, however, no difference in self-esteem between adoptees (N = 10,977) and nonadopted comparisons (N = 33,862) across 88 studies. This was equally true for international, domestic, and transracial adoptees. Across 18 studies including 2,198 adoptees, no differences in self-esteem were found between transracial and same-race adoptees. In contrast, in a small set of 3 studies (N = 300), adoptees showed higher levels of self-esteem than nonadopted, institutionalized children. The authors' findings may be explained by adoptees' resilience to overcome early adversity, supported by the large investment of adoptive families. Adoption can be seen as an effective intervention, leading to normative self-esteem.

*Please note: there is potential inaccurate statistical data. This was reported by Nuijten, M. B., Hartgerink, C. H. J., van Assen, M. A. L. M., Epskamp, S., & Wicherts, J. M. (2015). The prevalence*



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of statistical reporting errors in psychology (1985-2013). *Behavior Research Methods*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3758/s13428-015-0664-2>

### [Comparing Adolescents in Diverging Family Structures](#)

**Authors:** Feigelman, William

**Publication Date:** 2001

**Journal:** Adoption Quarterly

**Abstract:** This paper investigates whether adoptees are more prone to problems than their nonadopted peers. To illuminate this question another known higher problem risk-group was included: children living with one biological parent. Based on data collected from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, adoptees living in two-parent families (N = 369) were contrasted with children living in two-parent biologic families (N = 9,676) and with children living with one biological parent in step- or single-parent families (N = 7,457). As expected, adolescents living in step- and single-parent families showed far more adjustment difficulties than the other two subgroups. Adoptees showed behavior patterns much like those raised in two-parent biological families, except for three differences: they were more likely to run away from home, to get counseling help and to show less desire to attend college. The implications of these findings are discussed.

### [Adult adoptees and their friends: Current functioning and psychosocial well-being](#)

**Authors:** Borders, L. DiAnne; Penny, Judith M. and Portnoy, Francie

**Publication Date:** 2000

**Journal:** Family Relations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies

**Abstract:** This study was designed to investigate whether adult adoptees exhibit greater psychosocial dysfunction than non-adopted adults. 100 35–55 yr old adult adoptees and a matched group of 70 of their friends completed measures of psychosocial well-being thought particularly salient for adult adoptees. Results indicated more similarities (life satisfaction, life regrets, purpose in life, intimacy, substance abuse) than differences (connectedness, depression, self-esteem) between the two groups. Adoptees expressed stronger regrets about 75 general than adopted-related issues. Follow-up analyses suggested greater variability within the adoptee than the friend group on several variables; search status helped explain this greater variability.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

## ADOPTEE PERSPECTIVES

### [“I Finally Figured Out What It Means to Feel Safe”: A Qualitative Study of Adult Adoptees and Psychotherapy](#)

**Authors:** Geller, Amy

**Publication Date:** 2025

**Journal:** Adoption Quarterly

**Abstract:** This qualitative study explored 15 adult adoptees experiences with psychotherapy and other adoption-specific resources. Thematic analysis was employed to identify four themes: 1) relationships as a motive for pursuing psychotherapy, 2) the importance of the therapeutic relationship, 3) the role community plays in psychotherapy for adoptees, and 4) the adoptees evolving relationship with self. The findings demonstrate that relationships played a central role, both in adult adoptees' decision to pursue psychotherapy and satisfaction with the process. Practice implications include knowledge of middle age as a potentially critical time for adult adoptee awareness and the inclusion of adjunctive adoptee resources for satisfactory therapeutic experiences.



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### [Does the amount of family history matter? Perspectives of adult adoptees](#)

**Authors:** Williams, Alyssa;Blake, Alise K.;Williamson Dean, Lori and Lepard Tassin, Tiffany

**Publication Date:** Jun ,2024

**Journal:** Journal of Genetic Counseling

**Abstract:** Through this qualitative study, we explored (1) how the amount of family history impacts adoptees' perceptions of healthcare and (2) adoptees' suggestions for improvement of their healthcare. Fourteen adult adoptees participated in semi-structured interviews via telephone or Zoom audio. Results revealed five themes: adoptees should have access to their family health history; several factors influence the importance of family history (reproduction, identity formation, age, and health concerns); many adoptees use direct-to-consumer testing to gain information about health risks or to find family members; completing history forms or being asked about family health history invokes negative emotions in adoptees; experiences with healthcare providers are variable for adoptees. These results show that unknown family health history can contribute to a negative perception of healthcare. Adoptees perceive family health history as important to know, and not having this information brings up complex emotions in the healthcare setting. To help mitigate the disparities and the negative emotions that adoptees feel, genetic counselors should consider acknowledging the complex emotions, reassuring adoptees with available preventative care, and revising preclinical paperwork, such as family health history questionnaires, to be more inclusive of those who lack this information. These changes have the potential to significantly improve healthcare experiences for adoptees. Healthcare providers, especially genetic counselors, need to continue to learn about and advocate for this population.

### [When people adopted from severely depriving institutions become parents: The experiences of young adult mothers from the ERA study and their adoptive parents](#)

**Authors:** Edwards, Christopher;Kennedy, Mark;Knights, Nicky;Kovshoff, Hanna;Kreppner, Jana;Maughan, Barbara and Edmund JS Sonuga-Barke

**Publication Date:** 2023

**Journal:** Adoption & Fostering

**Abstract:** It has been reported that adult adoptees with histories of maltreatment face particular challenges when they become parents. Here we explore this issue using a qualitative analysis of the views of 14 adoptee mothers, who suffered severe institutional deprivation in the Romanian orphanages of the late 1980s before being adopted into the UK, and their adoptive parents. Following a thematic analysis, we report several perceived benefits of becoming a parent, as well as co-occurring difficulties and challenges. Benefits included a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment, feeling more motivated personally and professionally and the positive experience of having a relationship with a biological relative. Challenges related, in particular, to some adoptee parents' abilities to appraise risk relating to their children and to difficulties in organising day-to-day activities. Practical and emotional support from adoptive grandparents was very often crucial for adoptee parents' success and wellbeing. Implications for research and practice are discussed, emphasising that deprivation-related difficulties expand into adulthood and for some can impact their ability to parent.

### [Adoption openness and adoption stigma: a retrospective study of adult adoptees.](#)

**Authors:** Grigoropoulos, Iraklis

**Publication Date:** 2022

**Journal:** SN Social Sciences

**Abstract:** This study explored adult adoptees' experiences and challenges concerning their adoption and the extent to which adoption issues were openly discussed within the adoptive family. Listening to the perspective of adoptees is important as their experiences, and expectations can influence their well-being and the success of their placement. Fourteen adult adoptees participated in this study. Qualitative data were gathered using semi-structured interviews. Interviews took place between June 2020 and November 2020. The analysis of transcripts was conducted according to the interpretative



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phenomenological analysis (IPA) guidelines. Three themes related to the aims of the current research emerged from the data: (a) adoption secrecy, (b) adoptees' expectations for communication openness, and (c) adoption stigma. This study provides valuable insight into adoption communication openness, recognition of adoption stigma, and adoption microaggressions

### [Rediscovering latent trauma: An adopted adult's perspective.](#)

**Authors:** Merritt, Michele

**Publication Date:** 2022

**Journal:** Child Abuse & Neglect

**Abstract:** Though studies showing a causal relationship between adoption and trauma are scarce, there is enough cross-disciplinary research to suggest such a connection. Likewise, there are many adult adopted persons, like myself, who see their adoption narratives as traumatic in one way or another. Mental health outcomes for adopted people also indicate adoption might be a source of and not just a preventative measure against trauma. In this paper, I utilize an autoethnographic approach to highlight the relationship between infant adoption and what I refer to as "latent traumatic memories." Recounting several major life events that led to traumatic upheavals in my understanding of my own identity as an adopted person, I then relate my story to current research on trauma experienced very early in life and how it is remembered implicitly in the body. My account, I argue, highlights the need to further research adopted people's evolving views about their adoption and how and to what extent certain events in adulthood precipitate the rediscovery of latent trauma.

[What is the lived experience of growing up in an adopted family?](#) [please note: this is a thesis so caution should be made on the information provided]

**Authors:** Lutz, K.T.

**Publication Date:** 2011

**Date Retrieved:** Jan 30, 2025

**Abstract:** The primary purpose of this study was to elicit a "story" from the perspective of participants about their experiences of growing up with the knowledge that they are adopted, and examine qualitatively how their life unfolds, and what it means for them. Six participants were interviewed in an open format interview using each participant's pre-prepared timeline as a guide for the interview. Interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed. The narratives created were analyzed using the theoretical framework of descriptive phenomenology. From a content analysis, seven major and interrelated themes emerged: (1) Uniqueness – a felt sense of a qualitative difference from non-adoptees; (2) Connection – to others who share the experience of being adopted; (3) Vulnerability – to the possible content of the information they may come across if / when actualizing their curiosities; (4) Incompleteness – a feeling that there is missing information about their lives; (5) Acute or hyper awareness to similarities and differences with family members – the desire to share a genetic background or to look like someone; (6) Gratitude to / compassion for biological and adopted families; (7) Curiosity – about ones origins. These themes, in light of the current literature, identify that while there may be a formula, as in the set of common themes, it is not necessarily a formula for traumatic loss, rather an opportunity to help identify issues adoptees may need to work on through natural evolution or clinical work. Future studies will be important in adding validity to the themes identified as well as identifying individual variables that may be important when considering their experiences of growing up in adopted families.

[BACK TO TOP](#)



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## MOTHERHOOD AND PRIMARY CAREGIVER

### [Parenting and child adjustment in families with primary caregiver fathers](#)

**Authors:** Jones, Catherine;Foley, Sarah and Golombok, Susan

**Publication Date:** 2022

**Journal:** Journal of Family Psychology

**Abstract:** Although greater attention has been paid to fathers' involvement in caregiving in recent decades, there is limited understanding of families with primary caregiver fathers (PCFs), particularly in terms of parental psychological health and parenting quality. Findings are presented from a study of 41 PCF, 45 primary caregiver mother (PCM), and 41 dual-earner (DE) families in the U.K. with children aged 3–6 years. Standardized interviews and questionnaires on parental psychological well-being, parenting and child adjustment were completed by fathers, mothers, and teachers. No differences were found between family types on any of the measures. However, multilevel modeling showed that increased parental stress was associated with greater child difficulties irrespective of family type. Overall, the findings revealed that the PCFs were well-adjusted to their parenting role and showed no differences in quality of parenting to PCMs. The study findings challenge the assumption that women are more suited to primary caregiving than men. Policy implications for fathers and their families are discussed.

### 'Reinterpreting Motherhood: Separating Being a “Mother” from Giving Birth'

**Item Type:** Book Section

**Authors:** Naka, M.

**Publication Year:** 2021

**In Book Title:** Risks and Regulation of New Technologies

**Editors:** , in Matsuda, T., Wolff, J. and Yanagawa, T. (eds.)

Singapore: Springer, pp. 153–170

**ISBN:** 9789811586897

**Abstract:** The fact that only women give birth has been used to justify the view that women must “naturally” be the primary caregivers of newborns, which has constituted the core of the traditional understanding of motherhood. In order to reinterpret the motherhood, it is essential, therefore, to separate giving birth to a baby from the concept of raising a child or being the primary parent. The paper focuses on just such a theoretical separation. In addition, this paper proposes using the term “mother” to describe a person who does not physically give birth—such as fathers and foster parents—if they form a close connection with a child through their “mothering,” which may transform their way of existence as a result. Half of the paper is devoted to an examination of the practical example of newborn adoption due to an undesired pregnancy, including babies left in baby hatches or anonymous/confidential childbirth. Such instances serve as exploration of the actual possibility, theoretically considered in the first half of the paper, of separating the concepts of giving birth and being a primary parent.

### [Identity construction as a mother: A comparative study between adopted and nonadopted women](#)

**Authors:** Pérez, Meritxell Pacheco;Sala, Laia Garcia and Ortega, Marta Canal

**Publication Date:** 2016

**Journal:** Journal of Constructivist Psychology

**Abstract:** From a constructivist perspective we studied the experience of motherhood in a comparative study with 15 adopted women and 15 nonadopted women, all of them also biological mothers. We used the social self grid, and it was analyzed by means of the program RECORD 5.0 and also through content analysis. Results show similarities and differences between the two groups in the construction of identity as a mother. Although in both samples the self as a mother is constructed similarly to the self in their couple relationship, this is more evident in the case of adoptive daughters, and the difference is statistically significant. The meanings attributed to their own



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motherhood are similar in both samples and have to do with enjoying motherhood. Nonetheless, in the adoptive sample there are more constructs related to control and doing things right, and in the biological sample there are more constructs referring to naturalness and devotion. Moreover, in the adoptive sample there appears a higher presence of cognitive conflicts and lower self-esteem, and both results tend to significance.

### [Framing Mothers: Childcare Research and the Normalization of Maternal Care](#)

**Authors:** Wolf, Joan B.

**Publication Date:** -03-01 ,2016

**Journal:** Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society

**Abstract:** The National Institute of Child and Human Development Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (SECCYD), conducted from 1991 to 2009, reveals how the discourse of childcare research normalizes primary maternal care and distinctly gendered parenting responsibilities. Although the SECCYD deliberately challenges the idea that all children and all forms of care are analytically interchangeable, it implicitly accepts the notion that primary maternal care is normal for every child, or the standard by which any other care should be evaluated, by relying on theories, concepts, and methods that position mothers as uniquely responsible for healthy children. Assumptions about the normatively maternal architecture of child development shaped the questions the authors asked, how they went about answering them, and how they interpreted the results. The study ultimately concludes that nonmaternal care does not put children at developmental risk. But it does so by demonstrating that such care neither displaces children's primary relationship with their mothers nor upsets the normal gender functioning of nuclear families. This normalization arbitrarily limits what constitutes a healthy family by foreclosing the possibility that nonmaternal primary relationships, such as those between a developing child and a father, two fathers, two mothers, grandparents, or any other constellation of caregiving, might offer a distinct and healthy developmental path. It also suggests that the central concepts and outcome measures of psychology discourse on childcare need substantial rethinking.

### [Do toddlers prefer the primary caregiver or the parent with whom they feel more secure? The role of toddler emotion](#)

**Authors:** Umemura, Tomo;Jacobvitz, Deborah;Messina, Serena and Hazen, Nancy

**Publication Date:** -02-01 ,2013

**Journal:** Infant Behavior and Development

**Abstract:** This study tested Bowlby and Ainsworth's hypothesis that a hierarchy of caregivers exists whereby infants prefer one caregiver over another when distressed. We examined parent gender (mother vs. father), primary caregiver status (defined as the parent who spent most time with the infant and performed most of the caregiving tasks), and role of toddlers' history of attachment security with each parent, as predictors of toddlers' preference for a particular caregiver when the toddlers are distressed and when they are content. Infants' attachment security with each parent was assessed at 12–15 months. At 24 months, mother–child and father–child interactions were observed in triadic (mother, father, toddler) home interactions. When distressed, regardless of the security of their attachment to each parent, toddlers more often interacted with the primary caregiver. When content, toddlers did not show this preference. As expected, toddlers' recovery from distress was predicted by their security of attachment with the parent whom they approached when distressed.

[BACK TO TOP](#)



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## ATTACHMENT AND BONDING

### [Defining Attachment and Bonding: Overlaps, Differences and Implications for Music Therapy Clinical Practice and Research in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit \(NICU\)](#)

**Authors:** Ettenberger, Mark;Bieleninik, Łucja;Epstein, Shulamit and Elefant, Cochavit

**Publication Date:** February 1 ,2021

**Journal:** International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health

**Abstract:** Preterm birth and the subsequent hospitalization in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) is a challenging life event for parents and babies. Stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, limitations in holding or touching the baby, and medical complications during the NICU stay can negatively affect parental mental health. This can threaten the developing parent-infant relationship and might adversely impact child development. Music therapy in the NICU is an internationally growing field of clinical practice and research and is increasingly applied to promote relationship building between parents and babies. The two most commonly used concepts describing the early parent-infant relationship are 'attachment' and 'bonding'. While frequently used interchangeably in the literature, they are actually not the same and describe distinctive processes of the early relationship formation. Thus, it is important to discuss the overlaps and differences between attachment and bonding and the implications for music therapy clinical practice and research. Whereas providing examples and possible scenarios for music therapists working on either bonding or attachment, the distinction between both concepts is relevant for many health care professionals concerned with early parenting interventions in the NICU. This will hopefully lead to a more precise use of theory, and ultimately, to a more informed clinical practice and research.

### [Pre-natal Attachment and Parent-To-Infant Attachment: A Systematic Review](#)

**Authors:** Trombetta, Tommaso;Giordano, Maura;Santonnicolo, Fabrizio;Vismara, Laura;Della Vedova, Anna Maria and Rollè, Luca

**Publication Date:** March 17 ,2021

**Journal:** Frontiers in Psychology 12

**Abstract:** This systematic review aims to analyze and systematize studies focused on the association between pre-natal attachment and parent-to-infant attachment, in order to clarify the emerging results and provide useful information for clinical purposes. Nineteen studies were included. Sixteen research identified a positive relationship between pre-natal attachment and parent-to-infant attachment, and three articles highlighted a negative association between antenatal attachment and post-partum bonding disorders. These results were found both in women and men, in normative and at-risk pregnancies, adopting different assessment approaches (i.e., self-report measures, observations, and projective measures). However, only small or moderate associations were found. Future studies are needed to further confirm these findings across different populations (e.g., male samples, non-normative samples or samples in disadvantaged conditions) and with different methodological approaches (e.g., observational measures). Moreover, studies would be needed in order to clarify mechanisms through which pre-natal attachment influences parent-to-infant attachment, as well as protective and risk factors which intervene between these two variables.

[Attachment and loss. volume 1: attachment](#) [selected pages available on Google Books, for a new revisited and updated version in paper copy please complete [this form](#)]

**Item Type:** Book

**Author:** Bowlby, J.

**Publication Date:** 1982 new version: 2014 (**author:** Holmes, J.)

**Abstract** [updated and revisited version]: John Bowlby is one of the outstanding psychological theorists of the twentieth century. This new edition of *John Bowlby and Attachment Theory* is both a biographical account of Bowlby and his ideas and an up-to-date introduction to contemporary attachment theory and research, now a dominant force in psychology, counselling, psychotherapy and child development.



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## TRAUMA AND INTERVENTIONS

### [The Adoptee Consciousness Model: Integration with Family Counseling Theory and Practice](#)

**Authors:** Branco, Susan F.;Kim, JaeRan and Newton, Grace

**Publication Date:** -10-14 ,2024

**Journal:** The Family Journal

**Abstract:** Transracial adult adoptee storylines are increasingly represented across media platforms, yet counseling practice guidelines for the population remain limited. The authors provide updated counseling strategies by applying the Adoptee Consciousness Model (ACM). Via a fictitious case study of one adult transracial adoptee, the authors integrate the ACM with three family systems theories. Recommendations for individual, couple, and family counselors and therapists are provided.

### [Comparing Childhood Characteristics of Adopted and Non-adopted Individuals Deceased by Suicide](#)

**Authors:** Ligier, Fabienne;Body Lawson, Festus;Lamourette, Marilou;Giguère, Charles-Edouard;Lesage, Alain and Séguin, Monique

**Publication Date:** June 3 ,2022

**Journal:** Frontiers in Psychiatry

**Abstract:**This study included 13 adopted and 26 non-adopted individuals deceased by suicide as well as 26 non-adopted living control individuals. Cases were taken from a data bank created over the last decade by researchers of [our institution] comprising a mixture of 700 suicide cases and living control individuals aged from 14 to 84. Adopted and non-adopted individuals deceased by suicide; adopted individuals deceased by suicide and non-adopted living control individuals were each compared on Axis I and II disorders, early life events, and burdens of adversity. Results show significant differences, with a higher rate of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, mental health comorbidity and Cluster C personality disorders among adopted individuals. Furthermore, adopted individuals have higher adversity scores prior to the age of 15. This study underlines the fact that adoptive families need to be supported throughout adoption. Health care professionals need specialized training on this matter, and the psychological challenges adopted individuals face need to be treated at the earliest juncture.

### [Charting the trajectories of adopted children's emotional and behavioral problems: The impact of early adversity and postadoptive parental warmth.](#)

**Authors:** Paine, Amy L.;Perra, Oliver;Anthony, Rebecca and Shelton, Katherine H.

**Publication Date:** 2021

**Journal:** Development & Psychopathology

**Abstract:** Children who are adopted from care are more likely to experience enduring emotional and behavioral problems across development; however, adoptees' trajectories of mental health problems and factors that impact their trajectories are poorly understood. Therefore, we used multilevel growth analyses to chart adoptees' internalizing and externalizing problems across childhood, and examined the associations between pre-adoptive risk and post-adoptive protective factors on their trajectories. This was investigated in a prospective longitudinal study of case file records (N = 374) and questionnaire-based follow-ups (N = 96) at approximately 5, 21, and 36 months post-adoptive placement. Pre-adoptive adversity (indexed by age at placement, days in care, and number of adverse childhood experiences) was associated with higher internalizing and externalizing scores; the decrease in internalizing scores over childhood was accelerated for those exposed to lower levels of pre-adoptive risk. Warm adoptive parenting was associated with a marked reduction in children's internalizing and externalizing problems over time. Although potentially limited by shared methods variance and lack of variability in parental warmth scores, these findings demonstrate the deleterious impact of pre-adoptive risk and the positive role of exceptionally warm adoptive parenting on



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children's trajectories of mental health problems and have relevance for prevention and intervention strategies.

**[Adult disinhibited social engagement in adoptees exposed to extreme institutional deprivation: examination of its clinical status and functional impact.](#)**

**Authors:** Kennedy, Mark;Kreppner, Jana;Knights, Nicky;Kumsta, Robert;Maughan, Barbara;Golm, Dennis;Hill, Jonathan;Rutter, Michael;Schlotz, Wolff and Sonuga-Barke, Edmund

**Publication Date:** Nov ,2017

**Journal:** British Journal of Psychiatry

**Abstract:** We examine these issues in the young adult follow-up of the English and Romanian Adoptees study. Method A total of 122 of the original 165 Romanian adoptees who had spent up to 43 months as children in Ceausescu's Romanian orphanages and 42 UK adoptees were assessed for DSE behaviours, neurodevelopmental and mental health problems, and impairment between ages 2 and 25 years. Results Young adult DSE behaviour was strongly associated with early childhood deprivation, with a sixfold increase for those who spent more than 6 months in institutions. However, although DSE overlapped with autism spectrum disorder and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder symptoms it was not, in itself, related to broader patterns of mental health problems or impairments in daily functioning in young adulthood. Conclusions DSE behaviour remained a prominent, but largely clinically benign, young adult feature of some adoptees who experienced early deprivation.

**[Decrease in Behavioral Problems and Trauma Symptoms Among At-Risk Adopted Children Following Trauma-Informed Parent Training Intervention.](#)**

**Authors:** Purvis, Karyn B.;Razuri, Erin Becker;Howard, Amanda R. Hiles;Call, Casey D.;DeLuna, Jamie Hurst;Hall, Jordan S. and Cross, David R.

**Publication Date:** 2015

**Journal:** Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma

**Abstract:** Children who have experienced early adversities are at risk for behavioral problems and trauma symptoms. Using a two-group, pre-post intervention design, the current study evaluated the effectiveness of a parent training utilizing Trust-Based Relational Intervention, a trauma-informed, attachment-based intervention, in reducing behavioral problems and trauma symptoms in at-risk adopted children. Children of parents in the treatment group (n = 48) demonstrated significant decreases in behavioral problems on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and significant decreases in trauma symptoms on the Trauma Symptoms Checklist for Young Children after intervention. Scores for children in a matched-sample control group did not change. Findings suggest that Trust-Based Relational Intervention is effective at addressing many behavioral problems and trauma symptoms in children with histories of adversities.

**[Counseling Adult Adoptees](#)**

**Authors:** Corder, Kate

**Publication Date:** -10-01 ,2012

**Journal:** The Family Journal 20(4), pp. 448–452

**Abstract:** This review presents various resources about working with adult adoptees in order to inform counselors in their practice. Topics covered include basics of adoption, including types of adoption and adoption statistics; possible issues adult adoptees may face; and suggestions and implications for counselors. The article addresses some of the serious emotional and psychological issues the adult adoptee can bring to the counseling relationship. Also included is a discussion of the search process for birthparents and the counselor's possible role in this process.





**[Early neglect and abuse predict diurnal cortisol patterns in adults A study of international adoptees.](#)**

**Authors:** van der Vegt, Esther J. M.;van der Ende, Jan;Kirschbaum, Clemens;Verhulst, Frank C. and Tiemeier, Henning

**Publication Date:** Jun ,2009

**Journal:** Psychoneuroendocrinology

**Abstract:** In the present study, we investigated the long-term relationship between early maltreatment - at different levels of severity - and basal cortisol secretion in adults adopted as children. A sample of international adoptees was followed from childhood to adulthood. In childhood, adoptive parents had provided information about neglect and abuse prior to adoption. As adults, adoptees collected saliva samples four times a day. The relationship between early maltreatment and cortisol secretion was examined, primarily with multilevel analyses in 623 adoptees. Morning cortisol levels were lower in adoptees whose adoptive parents had reported severe neglect or abuse than in non-neglected or non-abused participants (respective estimates (standard errors (SEs)) and p-values: -0.33 (0.090),  $p=0.0002$  and -0.63 (0.20),  $p=0.002$ ). Relative to non-neglected adoptees, those who had allegedly experienced severe neglect also had a flatter diurnal slope (estimate (SE) and p-value: 0.028 (0.0088),  $p=0.002$ ). In contrast, relative to non-abused participants, adoptees whose reported abuse was moderately severe had high cortisol levels and a steeper cortisol diurnal slope (respective estimates (SEs) and p-values: 0.29 (0.13),  $p=0.003$  and -0.039 (0.012),  $p=0.01$ ). Thus, early neglect and abuse appear to have associations with cortisol levels and the diurnal slope, even when children are raised in another environment after their early maltreatment. Our study suggests that the severity of the early maltreatment may be related to the basal cortisol pattern.

**[Counseling Adopted Persons in Adulthood](#)**

**Authors:** Baden, Amanda L. and Mary O'Leary Wiley

**Publication Date:** 2007

**Journal:** The Counseling Psychologist

**Abstract:** For the past 50 years, adults who were adopted during infancy have been research participants for empirical studies with goals ranging from twin studies for heritability, to adjustment following adoption, to attachment. While the research body is broad, it has given little attention to counseling practices with adopted adults. Because empirical research and clinical practice can inform each other, this article integrates literatures in both areas so that counseling practice with adopted adults can guide research, just as research guides practice. The authors grouped the clinically relevant literature into three main areas: identity (including genealogical and transracial adoption issues), search and reunion, and long-term outcomes. Within each section, the authors critiqued the literature as it informs counseling practice, used case studies to depict clinical implications, and suggested treatment strategies for use with adult adoptees. Epidemiological research found adequate adjustment for adopted adults. However, clinicians and researchers must address the consistent finding that a subset of adoptees struggles and copes with issues different than their nonadopted counterparts. The authors identify best clinical practices and a future research agenda related to adult adoptees and propose an adoption-sensitive paradigm for research and practice.

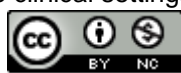
**[Handbook on the clinical treatment of adopted adolescents and young adults](#)** [please complete the form to request the book]

**Editors:** Bertocci, D; Deeg, C.; Mayers, L.A.

**Publication Date:** 2024

**Journal:** New York, NY: Routledge. pp.336.

**Abstract:** Most of the adoption literature on assessment and treatment focuses on adoptive families and their pre-adolescent children. It is intended primarily for a readership of adoptive parents and "adoption professionals", including the broad fields of child welfare and social service. This handbook, attempts to address the needs primarily of health and mental health professionals who provide services in diverse clinical settings where adopted patients may be seen more at random. These



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settings range from private treatment services, including private practice, to family therapy settings; hospital inpatient, outpatient, and intensive outpatient treatment programs; and services offering clinical specialties, such as for anxiety disorders or depression, eating disorders, dual diagnosis, trauma, and attachment. This collection bridges the voices of international scholars and adopted persons to share knowledge about clinical practice with adopted people in adolescence and early adulthood. Coming at a time when countries are beginning to focus on adoption reform, it is the first to address not only the external, systemic contributions to their developmental complexities but also the underlying, internal meanings of being adopted as children become adolescents and mature into adulthood. The book explains how adopted clients differ from those not adopted and emphasizes the need for clinical research on adopted people in this older age group. Exploring how clinicians can understand their client's clinical needs, it also offers specific protocols and frameworks for assessment and necessary modifications in language and treatment. Chapters examine the legal and sociopolitical cultures, policies, and practices in which adoption is embedded, calling for broad systemic change. Embracing theoretical, conceptual, and global perspectives, this handbook is written for clinicians in all disciplines, at all tiers of practice, administration, and training, identifying the key roles they can potentially play in expanding and better focusing our understanding of the psychology of being adopted.

### **Psychological adjustment in adult adoptees: Assessment of distress, depression, and anger**

**Author:** Cubito, David S. and Obremski Brandon, Karen

**Publication Date:** 2000

**Journal:** American Journal of Orthopsychiatry

**Abstract:** Psychological adjustment was assessed in a sample of 525 female and 191 male adoptees (21–61 yrs old). Analyses were conducted by gender; by search status, i.e., those who had never searched, those who were searching, and those who had made contact with their biological parents, and by history of mental health service utilization. Adoptees were asked to complete self-report measures of overall distress, depressive symptomatology, and anger. Compared to normative data, the sample reported significantly higher levels of psychological maladjustment, only women adoptees scored higher on a scale measuring anger. Overall, adoptees' scores were elevated but did not approach levels typical of outpatient populations. Mental health professionals should be alert to the possibility that searching for one's biological heritage, however, valuable it may be to the adult adoptee, could be either a stressful process or a marker for psychological distress.

*Please note: data may be inaccurate. This was reported by Nuijten, M. B., Hartgerink, C. H. J., van Assen, M. A. L. M., Epskamp, S., & Wicherts, J. M. (2015). The prevalence of statistical reporting errors in psychology (1985-2013). Behavior Research Methods. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3758/s13428-015-0664-2>*

**[BACK TO TOP](#)**

## **DATA**

**The Adoption Barometer: a stocktake of adoption in England - May 2024** [relevant extracts were added to the summary at the top]

**Author/Organisation:** AdoptionUK

**Publication Date:** 2024

**Accessed:** Jan 30, 2025

**Beyond the Adoption Order: challenges, interventions and adoption disruption - Research report**

**Authors:** Selwyn, J., Wijedasa, D. and Meakings, S.

**Publication Date:** 2014

**Accessed:** Jan 30, 2025

**Abstract:** This report gives a deeper understanding of the children pathway in the social and legal system in the UK. This report emphasizes on disruptions which is an area that is less known. Although



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report was done in 2014, information may still be of interest.

Extract: "Between April 1st 2000 and 31st March 2011, 37,335 children were adopted and of these 565

were known to have disrupted post order and information was available in the database.

- Nearly two thirds of disruptions occurred during the teenage years.
- Gender and ethnicity were not associated with greater risk of disruption.
- The children whose adoptions had disrupted were significantly older at entry to care (average 3 years old) in comparison with children (average 1 year old) whose adoptions were intact. Nearly three-quarters of all the children had been abused or neglected.
- Children who had experienced a disruption also had significantly more moves whilst looked after and waited longer to be placed with their adoptive family compared with those children whose placements were intact.
- Children who were no longer living with their adoptive families were significantly more likely to have lengthier adoption processes compared with the children whose adoptions were intact. This was the case for those who entered care under the age of 4 years old and those who entered over 4 years of age.
- Three-quarters of the children who experienced a disruption were older than 4 years of age at placement with their adoptive family and a quarter were younger than 4 years of age. In comparison, 70% of children in intact placements were under the age of four.
- Children whose foster carers became their adoptive parents entered care at a similarly young age to those who were adopted by stranger adoptive parents. However, they waited on average two years before their foster placement was confirmed as an adoptive placement and were on average 5.2 years old at the time of the Adoption Order. In comparison, those adopted by strangers were only 3.8 years old at the time of the Order.
- Foster carer adoptions were not more stable than adoptions by stranger adoptive parents.
- The proportion of adoptions that disrupted varied by local authority.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

## TRANSRACIAL AND INTERNATIONAL ADOPTEES

### [Bullying victimization among internationally adopted adolescents: Psychosocial adjustment and moderating factors.](#)

**Authors:** Ferrari, Laura;Caravita, Simona;Ranieri, Sonia;Canzi, Elena and Rosnati, Rosa

**Publication Date:** 2022

**Journal:** PLoS ONE

**Abstract:** Bullying constitutes a serious risk factor for the psychosocial adjustment of young people in both the general population and minority groups. Among minorities, international adoptees are likely to show a specific vulnerability to the experience of being bullied, moderated by specific risk and protective factors. This study aimed to investigate the association between adoptees' experience of bullying victimization and their psychosocial adjustment, and to explore the moderating role of adoptive identity and reflected minority categorization. An online, anonymous self-report questionnaire was completed by 140 adolescents (13-17 years), who were internationally adopted by Italian families. Findings showed that being victimized was associated with higher levels of emotional and behavioral difficulties, but that the strength of this relation varied according to the levels of adoptive identity and reflected minority categorization. Specifically, victimization was found to have a more detrimental and negative impact on psychological adjustment for adoptees who were highly identified with the adoptive group, and reported to be less perceived by others as members of the minority group. Results are discussed in relation to recommendations for further research as well as for professionals working with internationally adopted adolescents.



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**[The intersection of race and adoption: Experiences of transracial and international adoptees with microaggressions](#)**

**Author:** White, Ebony E., Baden, Amanda L., Ferguson, Alfonso L. and Smith, Leanice

**Publication Date:** 2022

**Journal:** Journal of Family Psychology

**Abstract:** Adoption has been viewed as inferior to birthing, carrying social stigma which has resulted in members of the adoption triad, specifically adoptees, experiencing discrimination at all levels of the ecological system (Baden, 2016; Weegar, 2000). Transracial and international adoptees holding marginalized racial or ethnic identities contend with discrimination around their adoption status and their racial designation. Unique to the transracial adoptee experience is belonging to families who do not share their racial and cultural backgrounds. A grounded theory qualitative approach was used to understand the experiences of transracial and international adoptees with racial microaggressions (RMAs) and adoption microaggressions (AMAs). Results from this study reflected interviews from 11 transracial adoptees (at least 18 years old), with specific attention on AMAs and RMAs. All participants reported experiencing AMAs and RMAs both within and outside of their families. Counselors, counselor educators, and researchers are urged to understand this unique, intersectional experience to develop competency in effectively supporting this population.

**[Discrimination and mental health in adult transracial adoptees: Can parents foster preparedness?](#)**

**Author:** Presseau, Candice, DeBlaere, Cirleen and Luu, Linh P.

**Publication Date:** 2019

**Journal:** American Journal of Orthopsychiatry

**Abstract:** In response to the growing trend of White parents adopting children from different racial backgrounds, and heeding the call for more research on adoption-related issues, the present study examined the relationship between perceived racial discrimination and mental health of 206 adult transracial adoptees adopted by White parents. In addition, the study examined adoptive parent racial socialization as a buffering variable in the perceived discrimination–mental health link. We hypothesized that racial discrimination experiences would be related to greater psychological distress and poorer psychological well-being. Furthermore, we expected the relationships between perceived discrimination and mental health outcomes to be weaker for transracial adoptees who reported higher levels of parental racial socialization by their adoptive parents during their youth, but stronger for those reporting lower levels of parental racial socialization. Interestingly, our results showed that racial socialization functioned differently depending on the mental health outcome under investigation. Although, as expected, racial discrimination was positively associated with psychological distress and negatively related to psychological well-being, parental racial socialization only moderated the discrimination–distress link. Limitations and implications for research, practice, and policy are discussed.

**[Shifting views and building bonds: Narratives of internationally adopted children about their dual culture.](#)**

**Authors:** Benoit, Laelia; Harf, Aurelie; Sarmiento, Laura; Skandrani, Sara and Moro, Marie Rose

**Publication Date:** 2018

**Journal:** Transcultural Psychiatry

**Abstract:** American literature on international adoption suggests that adoptees' pride in the culture of their birth country improves their self-esteem and helps them to cope with experiences of racism. Parents are therefore encouraged to teach their adopted children multicultural skills to improve their psychological well-being. French psychologists, on the contrary, suggest that adoptees should feel fully members of their adoptive country and families. These practices shed light on the respective multicultural and universalist paradigms in the US and France. Few papers, however, consider the



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opinions of adoptees. This study explores internationally adopted children raised in France and their spontaneous curiosity about their birth country. The present study used semi-structured interviews with 19 adoptees aged 8-18 years old, to explore their attitudes towards the culture of their birth country. Transcripts of recorded interviews were analyzed according to interpretative phenomenological analysis. While there was striking consistency of interest in birth countries, adoptees' expression of curiosity varied across time. Children described distinctive goals: knowing more about their history, finding relatives, becoming a multicultural citizen, or simply helping people. Their parents' involvement was thus seen as helpful, but adoptees stress the need to feel ready and may prefer independent ways of learning about their birth country. Adoptees' multiple feelings of belonging derive not only from multicultural training but from a lifelong construction of self. Professionals and parents may need to adapt to adoptees' individual development, distinctive time frames, and ways of learning to provide better support to them.

**[Ethnic socialization, perceived discrimination, and psychological adjustment among transracially adopted and nonadopted ethnic minority adults](#)**

**Author:** Arnold, Tara, Braje, Sopagna Eap, Kawahara, Debra and Shuman, Tara

**Publication Date:** 2016

**Journal:** American Journal of Orthopsychiatry.

**Abstract:** Little is known on how transracial adoptees (TRA) navigate issues of race and ethnicity. Using Shared Fate Theory as a framework, this study was interested in the moderating role of adoption status among a group of ethnic minority adults in explaining the relationship between ethnic socialization, perceived discrimination, and mental health outcomes. Nonadopted (NA; n = 83) and TRA (n = 87) ethnic minorities responded to measures on ethnic socialization, perceived discrimination, and psychological outcomes administered online. TRA and NA ethnic minorities reported similar levels of ethnic socialization, perceived discrimination, and psychological outcomes (depression and self-esteem). Perceived discrimination was significantly associated with depression for both TRA and NA ethnic minorities. Ordinal Least Squares (OLS) regressions that were run for a moderated moderational analysis suggest that the protective role of ethnic socialization depended on adoption status. Among the different forms of ethnic socialization, cultural socialization and preparation for bias significantly buffered against the effects of perceived discrimination, but the effects were more pronounced for TRA than for NA ethnic minorities. Because NA and TRA ethnic minorities were similarly affected by discrimination, it suggests that being a TRA does not confer any additional risk when experiencing discrimination. Additionally, the study found that ethnic socialization may continue to serve a protective role against the effects of discrimination into adulthood for TRA, but less so for NA ethnic minorities. These results have policy implications regarding the role of parental ethnicity in adoption decisions as well as the importance of educating adopted parents about ethnic socialization for ethnic minority children.

**[Is Early Experience Destiny? Review of Research on Long-Term Outcomes following International Adoption with Special Reference to the British Chinese Adoption Study](#)**

**Authors:** Grant, Margaret; Rushton, Alan and Simmonds, John

**Publication Date:** 2016

**Journal:** Thescientificworldjournal

**Abstract:** The pathway from adverse early experience to adulthood for internationally adopted children is complex in identifying key influences, impacts, and outcomes. This review arose from the authors' involvement in the British Chinese Adoption Study, a recent outcomes study that explored the links between early orphanage care, adoptive experiences, and midadulthood. It differs from previous reviews in focusing on a greater length of time since adoption. Both quantitative and qualitative studies were included to allow for examination of a fuller range of adult-related outcomes rather than mental health scores alone. The sampling, methods, and results of reviewed articles are summarised and a critical commentary is provided. Despite methodological differences and identified strengths and weaknesses, conclusions are drawn on the basis of the evidence available. Special attention is paid to the interpretation of negative outcomes. Findings identify areas that should be explored further





in order to gain a fuller understanding of midlife outcomes of people who experienced a poor start in life followed by international adoption. Such studies help in refining lifespan developmental theories.

**[Preadoption adversities and postadoption mediators of mental health and school outcomes among international, foster, and private adoptees in the United States](#)**

**Author:** Harwood, Robin, Feng, Xin and Yu, Stella

**Publication Date:** 2013

**Journal:** Journal of Family Psychology.

**Abstract:** Adopted children are a heterogeneous group, varying along numerous factors, including type of adoption (international, foster, private), length of exposure to preadoption adversities as indexed by age of adoption, history of preadoption maltreatment, and prenatal substance exposure. Yet, we know little about how these adversity factors are mediated by quality of postadoption parent–child relationships and/or the presence of special health care needs to produce specific child outcomes across different groups of U.S. adopted children. This study uses structural equation modeling to analyze cross-sectional data from the National Survey of Adoptive Parents to investigate differences in outcomes among three groups of U.S. adopted children: international, foster, and private. SEM results indicate that compared with privately adopted children, (a) children adopted from the foster care system were more likely to be identified with special health care needs, and (b) internationally adopted children showed on average poorer school performance as indexed by math and reading. Analyses yielded both direct and indirect paths between preadoption adversities and child outcomes, with the majority of associations mediated or partially mediated by quality of parent–child relationships and/or special health care needs status. The results of these analyses highlight the heterogeneity among different groups of adopted children within the United States and also underline the important mediating roles that the quality of parent–child relationship and children’s special health care needs status have on adopted children’s selected mental health and academic outcomes.

**[Impact of early childhood adversities on adult psychiatric disorders: a study of international adoptees.](#)**

**Authors:** van der Vegt, Esther J. M.;Tieman, Wendy;van der Ende, Jan;Ferdinand, Robert F.;Verhulst, Frank C. and Tiemeier, Henning

**Publication Date:** Sep ,2009

**Journal:** Social Psychiatry & Psychiatric Epidemiology

**Abstract:** This study investigated international adoptees who were taken out of their problematic environments as a consequence of their adoption to determine the effects of early adversities on adult psychiatric disorders, and to study whether these effects emerged de novo after childhood. Methods: A total of 1,364 adoptees (63.5% of the baseline sample) were followed. Parents provided information about early adversities prior to adoption, and mental health problems in childhood and adolescence. In adulthood, adoptees completed a standardized interview, generating DSM-IV diagnoses. Results: Children who experienced multiple adversities had an increased risk of having anxiety disorders (OR = 2.22; 95% CI: 1.11-4.45), mood disorders (OR = 2.20; 95% CI: 1.00-4.86) or substance abuse/dependence (OR = 3.81; 95% CI: 1.62-8.98) in adulthood. Several effects remained significant after correction for mental health problems in childhood and adolescence. Conclusions: Severe early adversities increase the risk of adult psychopathology, even when children are taken out of their problematic environments. Results suggest that psychiatric disorders may arise de novo after childhood due to early experiences.

**[Does age at adoption and geographic origin matter? A national cohort study of cognitive test performance in adult inter-country adoptees.](#)**

**Authors:** Odenstad, A.;Hjern, A.;Lindblad, F.;Rasmussen, F.;Vinnerljung, B. and Dalen, M.

**Publication Date:** Dec ,2008

**Journal:** Psychological Medicine

**Abstract: BACKGROUND:** The aim of this study was to analyse relations between proxies



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for adoption-related circumstances and cognitive development. Method: Results from global and verbal scores of cognitive tests at military conscription (mandatory for all Swedish men during these years) were compared between three groups (born 1968-1976): 746 adoptees born in South Korea, 1548 adoptees born in other non-Western countries and 330 986 non-adopted comparisons in the same birth cohort. Information about age at adoption and parental education was collected from Swedish national registers. Conclusions: Negative pre-adoption circumstances may have persistent influences on cognitive development. The prognosis from a cognitive perspective may still be good regardless of age at adoption if the quality of care before adoption has been 'good enough' and the adoption selection mechanisms do not reflect an overrepresentation of risk factors - both requirements probably fulfilled in South Korea.

[BACK TO TOP](#)

## FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DATABASES AND INFORMATION SOURCES USED					
	Pubmed		HMIC		BMJ Best Practice
x	Medline		Social Policy and Practice		Cochrane Library
	Emcare		CINAHL		TRIP
	Embase	x	PsycINFO	x	Grey Literature
	AMED		UpToDate		Other

PURPOSE OF SEARCH			
	Patient info/health & well being	x	Clinical decision making (inc. patient care)
	Executive Team support	x	Research/Education/Professional development
	Quality Improvement		Primary Care & Neighbourhoods Directorate support
	KM/Management decision making		Other

USER CATEGORY OF REQUESTOR			
	Medical students		Patients/public
	Nursing/midwifery students		Physician Associates
	Doctor/Psychiatrist		Public Health (Somerset CC)





	<b>Nurses/Midwives</b>	<b>x</b>	<b>Other</b>
	<b>Allied Health professionals</b>		

<b>HAS PERMISSION TO SHARE THE RESULTS BEEN OBTAINED FROM THE REQUESTOR?</b>			
<b>x</b>	<b>YES - share</b>		<b>NO – do not share</b>

<b>KEY WORDS/SEARCH STRATEGY INCLUDING MESH HEADINGS</b>	<b>LIMITS USED</b>
<p>Q1: cognitive analytic therapy and adoptees</p> <p>Q2: adoptees lived experiences Look at changes to understanding of adoption from the adoptees perspective. EG From early formulations that it was only ever "a good thing"/ babies can't remember to later understanding that it is a prime trauma experienced by the baby.</p> <p>Q3: mothers vs primary caregivers Look at any research which unpicks early care differentiating mothers rather than "primary caregiver" When was this term first used? Note examples of literature which interchanges mother with primary caregiver.</p> <p>Q4: attachment and bonding Any literature exploring a difference between attachment and bonding? Look at any research showing in utero bonding between mother and baby? And in days after birth.</p> <p>Q5 adoptees common trauma and therapeutic interventions Look at research drawing on common behaviours/presentations of adopted children and adults Look at what therapeutic interventions have been offered to adopted adults and evaluated.</p> <p>Q6: Is there any data revealing how many patients in mental health services who present with other symptoms and diagnoses ( eating disorders, anxiety and depression, relational problems, OCD, personality disorder diagnoses etc) have lived through adoption?</p>	English

