



bringing cutting edge education
to all members of the adoption and
foster constellation year after year

CALIFORNIA ADOPTION CONFERENCE



2020 WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS - MARCH 27TH

Morning Keynote

Understanding Trauma & Behavior in Adopted Children *CE Eligible*

Bryan Post

Bryan will discuss how the adoptive experience shapes the brain of the adopted child leading to heightened sensitivity, fearfulness, and genius. Bryan speaks to parents about the challenges they face when dealing with behaviors that are often present for adopted children. He helps parents understand the impact of early life trauma and the impact of interruptions in the attachment process. Bryan's straightforward, clear-cut approach has created peace and healing for hundreds of families; families who once operated in fear are now experiencing love.

Early Afternoon Sessions

Let's Give Em Something To Talk About—Tackling Race at Home, Navigating Multiracial Communities

Sidney Jacobs Allen & Jill Jacobs

This workshop will explore from toddlers to teens, what children and youth need and how parents can learn to create culturally affirming environments. This includes: what it means to become a family of color; how to talk about race as a family - inside and outside the home. We will explore children's feelings of rejection/of loss, implicit biases (both interpersonal and intrapersonal), as well as micro-aggressions. We will discuss understanding, empathy, and active allyship. Participants will have time for raising questions, concerns, and thoughtful discussion.

Project Search & Reunion; A Model for Agencies to Address Adoptee's Need to Know

Rena Konomis & Angela Tucker

For much of the 20th century adoption best practices included closed adoptions and agency secrecy. Current best practices recognize the importance of transparency for the purpose of healing from the losses that stem from adoption. Sealed record laws prevent adoptees from seeing their own files and birth information in most states – sometimes information in the files include gifts, pictures and other trinkets that biological parents wanted their child to have. We firmly believe that all individuals have a fundamental right to access information about their biological origins and be in possession of items that belong to them. Hear how both public and private agencies can change these approaches and make reparations for past harms caused by closed information.

Newborns, Money, Competition, Desperation: Ethics in Infant Adoption *CE Eligible*

Susan Dusza Guerra Leksander

As the landscape of adoption providers continues to be heavily dominated by for profit entities and “do-it-yourself” online matching services, solid ethics in voluntary infant placement and adoption become all the more critical. This workshop will raise questions about current practices in voluntary placements, especially as they impact interactions with expectant parents and pre-adoptive parents. We will identify specific questions that pre-adoptive and expectant parents considering domestic infant placements can ask to determine practices that are ethical, non-coercive and child-centered and encourage adoption professionals to hold themselves to high ethical standards.

Preparing for and Navigating the Teen Years

Thomas C. Rector

Ultimately, in our adoption and parenting journeys, we all get to navigate the teen years. In this interactive session, you'll learn how and why memories impact the teen years, how to prepare for and navigate the teen years with an eye on the future, and come away with a practical, proven methodology for building communication and relationship with your teens. The stories and activities presented will relate to the three stages of parenting and advocating for teens - before, during, and after the teen years.

Tools for Facilitating Permanency for Older or More Challenging Children *CE Eligible*

Sandy Sertyn & Heather Bollier-Yetter

We will explore aspects of Relationship Development Matching, a methodology used to effectively accomplish youth focused recruitment for the most difficult to place youth. We will discuss the methodology, and specific interventions to utilize for youth and family support specifically interventions that assist in improved attachment and bonding early on and throughout the placement as well as sharing our agency history over the past four years of implementation, allowing us to achieve 68% successful finalizations among the 244 youth referred over this time frame.

Seven Core Issues in Adoption: Implications for Practice *CE Eligible*

Sharon Kaplan Roszia

The Seven Core Issues in Adoption and Permanency offer a roadmap for clinicians and social workers to follow as they assist their clients with the complex challenges and additional tasks that they must master for a fulfilling and successful life journey. This workshop will explore guidelines and tools to implement in social work practice and therapeutic treatment. It offers practical guidance about how to implement strategies for health and healing with clients in a way that supports foster and adopted children's long-term well-being.

March 27th Late Afternoon Sessions

Trauma and Behavior: Practice Implications for Social Workers & Clinicians *CE Eligible*

Bryan Post

When it comes to diagnosis to children the focus has historically been on behaviors. Cutting edge research now reveals that trauma, an unconscious, non-verbal re-experiencing of a painful event may now have more to do with behaviors than we've ever known. In this workshop, Bryan will pull back the veil of why children behave the way they do combined with evidence-based practices that bring rapid reduction in the most severe behaviors.

Navigating Adoption in Schools

Malaika Parker

Outside of home, children spend more time at school than anywhere else, in an environment that is not always responsive to adopted children and their families. This workshop will help parents and teachers identify strategies to support adopted children in the face of structures that reinforce sometimes problematic assumptions and curriculum. How can you effect change with educators, colleagues, other parents who are not always well-informed about adoption, family diversity or how to create inclusive curriculum that acknowledges bias and supports difference? Parents and educators will have space to strategize about being an ally to adopted youth.

Voices of Lived Experience: Foster Alumni

Panel

Too often in the child welfare field, the voice and perspective of the youth in care is subordinated to that of the professionals and foster parents. The voices of former foster youth (aged out, not adopted) will be the focus of this panel as they are the truest experts on the experience of growing up in Foster Care. This workshop will be appropriate for foster parents, professionals, and families interested in fostering youth.

Helping White Parents Understand & Navigate Transracial Adoption—A Developmental Approach

Katie Wynen

Are you planning a transracial adoption, or already parenting across racial lines? In order to successfully meet your child's needs, you must be prepared to think about, learn about, and talk about race and racism as well as understand white privilege and how to honestly interrogate your own whiteness. We will explore how these issues impact you and your child throughout their developmental stages. We will review race facts in America, talk about why race matters in transracial adoption, and offer a developmental approach to talking about race with children hearing directly from a transracial adoptee about the challenges and strengths of transracial adoption. This workshop will not support a "color-blind" but rather a "color-affirming" approach.

Best Clinical Practices in Open Adoption—Reviewing the Last Thirty Years *CE Eligible*

Leslie Foge

The practice of Open Adoption has evolved since its introduction in the 1980's, due to the pressure from first parents and adopted persons. During this time, the art of counseling potential adoptive parents, potential first/birth parents and adoptive persons of all ages has been influenced by counseling theory, practical applications and many vast and concerning ethical issues. This didactic and experiential workshop will explore and attempt to define Best counseling practices in adoption in 2020.

Intersecting Identities: LGBTQ & Adoption; Supporting Youth

Laura Anderson

As parents, worrying about our children's well-being is nearly unavoidable. Yet, for parents of kids and teens who are navigating an adoptee identity AND are gender-expansive, nonbinary or transgender, worry can become consuming. Intense worry can interfere with parent child connectedness and communication. Parenting anxiety can also lead parents to say "No" when a "Yes" is the best answer for their child. Especially in the current socio-political climate, parenting from a place of fear takes a toll on parents and children alike and this workshop is designed to help parents identify their worries and recognize when their worries are shaping their parenting. Intersectional identities will be specifically considered.