



ADOPTER SUPPORT AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

2023



At Adoption@Heart, we know that the adoption journey both for the child and their parents is a lifelong process that will often have many ups, downs, and challenges along the way.

We can provide specialist support for specific adoption issues that you might face whilst your child is growing up. We hope that this leaflet helps you explore where support can be accessed throughout this life-long journey.



Services we provide:

- Monthly Adopter Support Group.
- Family Fun Days and Social Events.
- Regular Newsletter.
- Assessment of Adoption Support Needs.
- Parenting support for adoption issues.
- Therapeutic Parenting Course for parents of adopted children who have experienced attachment difficulties and complex trauma.
- Access to a range of therapeutic interventions including Theraplay, DDP, and Therapeutic Life Story Work.
- Advice and Consultation provided by the Adoption@Heart Therapist.
- Workshops to help you learn about and use therapeutic play techniques.
- Training on adoption issues such as parenting teenagers and talking to your child about adoption.
- Family and Friends Training.
- Support with facilitating contact arrangements and Keep in Touch arrangements.
- LGBT+ adopters can become individual members of New Family Social for free.
- Membership to Child and Trauma Community Hub (CATCH) (beginning Stage 1).
- Membership to National Association for Therapeutic Parents (post placement).

TRAINING COURSES AND WORKSHOPS



We will send you an email approximately three weeks prior to the course start date and you will be asked to confirm your attendance (a reply is required).

We reserve the right, where there are insufficient numbers, to cancel the training/workshops.

Talking to your child about adoption

Adopters are the narrators of their children's life stories, an invaluable and under recognised role that is also complicated and challenging.

Many adopters have questions around how to talk to children about adoption, how to tell difficult stories in a way that supports a child's self-esteem and how to be honest without re-traumatising.

This introductory workshop will encourage adopters to recognise the importance of their own contribution to their child's understanding of themselves and to begin to feel more confident as tellers of life stories.

Who should attend?

Priority will be given to adopters who have adopted a child or children.

This workshop will enable parents/carers to:

- To think about the importance of telling and explaining adoption.
- To consider age-appropriate explanations linked to a child's developmental stage
- To practice telling and explaining.
- To examine some basic principles of child development and identity.
- To appreciate that understanding one's own past history is essential in order to know who you are and in developing a strong sense of identity and positive self-esteem.
- To consider some of the practicalities and potential difficulties involved in undertaking life story work.
- Considering how to discuss additional siblings

The course will be held virtually on:

- **28th February 2023 10 – 2pm (closing date for registration is 14th February 2023)**
- **13th June 2023 10 – 2pm (closing date for registration is 30th May 2023)**
- **18th September 2023 10 – 2pm (closing date for registration is 4th September 2023)**
- **7th December 2023 10 – 2pm (closing date for registration is 23rd November 2023)**

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Introduction to using Theraplay® Informed Activities



Children learn and develop best through play!

Theraplay® is an attachment-based therapeutic approach that uses structured play to help parents to enhance attachment, self-esteem, trust in others and joyful engagement. Theraplay® has great value for children who have had difficult or disrupted early life experiences and can also be useful for children with developmental disorders such as autism and ADHD.

Who should attend?

Priority will be given to adopters who have children in place or adopted.

This workshop will enable parents/carers to:

- Gain an understanding of Theraplay® and how you can use it with your child.
- Understand the relationship of Theraplay® to attachment theory and why play is so important; The principles of Theraplay®; Using Theraplay® activities at home.

The sessions will be held virtually on:

- **6th March 2023 10am – 1pm** (closing date for registration is 20th February 2023)
- **16th May 2023 10am – 1pm** (closing date for registration is 2nd May 2023)
- **7th September 2023 10am – 1pm** (closing date for registration is 24th August 2023)
- **17th November 2023 10am – 1pm** (closing date for registration is 23rd November 2023)

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Introduction to Parenting Teenagers



How can adoptive parents and their teenagers navigate the challenges of the adolescent years?

This one-day workshop led by the Adoption@Heart Therapist will help parents of teenagers gain an understanding of their teenager's needs, learn strategies to help their teenager and themselves, and get some valuable peer support.

The training event will give you tips for coping with common problems. It also covers essential topics such as: family and peer relationships, developing healthy intimate relationships, emerging identity issues, and contacting birth family.

Who should attend?

Adopters of teenagers and adopters of pre-teens.

The sessions will be held virtually on the following dates.

- **17th April 2023 10am – 12pm** (closing date for registration is 5th April 2023)
- **12th October 2023 10am – 12pm** (closing date for registration is 28th September 2023)

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Friends and Family Training



This half-day course is designed for the relatives and close friends of Adoption@Heart's adoptive families. The course provides:

- An overview of the backgrounds of children placed for adoption.
- Attachment Theory and how children placed for adoption can form healthy attachments.
- An opportunity to explore ways of supporting adoptive parents and adopted children.

The course is running virtually on the following dates:

- **9th March 2023 10am – 12pm** (closing date for registration is 23rd February 2023)
- **29th June 2023 10am – 12pm** (closing date for registration is 15th June 2023)
- **4th October 2023 10am – 12pm** (closing date for registration is 20th September 2023)
- **11th December 2023 10am – 12pm** (closing date for registration is 27th November 2023)

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Transracial Adoption Training (for those who have or are planning on having a transracial adoption)



We are offering training to support and inform adoptive parents about the issues of race and culture involved in transracial adoption: when a child of one race is adopted by a family of another race.

We start from the premise that we acknowledge that racism exists and has a direct impact on all our lives. Transracial adoptees can feel a sense of disconnection when there is an insistence of a rejection of difference as opposed to a healthy acknowledgement of difference.

The training is an opportunity to talk about transracial adoption in a supportive and honest environment and includes:

- The history of transracial adoption
- Racial Trauma and the impact on the brain
- White privilege and other privilege
- White fragility
- Micro aggressions: the impact on the individual
- Colourism
- Identity formation

The course is running virtually on the following dates:

- **23rd March 2023 10am – 1pm** (closing date for registration is 9th March 2023)
- **7th November 2023 10am – 1pm** (closing date for registrations is 24th October 2023)

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Foundations for Attachment Therapeutic Parenting Programme



Foundations for Attachment Training Resource is a six-session programme to help parents and carers to nurture attachments with their child. It is designed specifically for those caring for children whose capacity to emotionally connect has been compromised as a result of attachment problems, trauma, and loss or separation. Informed by attachment theory and Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP), it consists of three core modules:

- Understanding Challenges of Parenting
- Therapeutic Parenting
- Looking After Self

The sessions will be held virtually on the following dates (participants must attend all 6 sessions of the programme):

- **23rd February 2023 and every Thursday until 31st March 2023 6pm – 8pm (closing date for registration is 7th February 2023)**
- **12th June and every Monday until 17th July 2023 10am – 12pm (closing date for registration is 26th May 2023)**
- **7th September and every Thursday until 12th October 2023 5pm – 7pm (closing date for registration is 18 August 2023)**

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Non-Violence Resistance Parenting Programme

Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) is an approach specifically designed to target violent, destructive, and controlling behaviours in children, adolescents, and young adults.

A recent outcome study has shown that NVR is very effective in improving the behaviour of a large percentage of young people. It also demonstrated that NVR reduces parents' or carers' feelings of helplessness, raises their confidence, and can improve parental mental health.

We will be delivering programmes virtually on the following dates to adopters with children placed (participants must attend all 5 sessions of the programme, as well as accessing the support phone calls that will take place in the weeks in between the group sessions):

16/02/2023 10am – 12pm

09/03/2023 10am – 12pm

23/03/2023 10am – 12pm

20/04/2023 10am – 12pm

04/05/2023 10am – 12pm

A Parent Self-Help group is also set up for participants to join following the parenting programme.

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Pre Placement Adoption Support Group

We hold bimonthly support groups which are aimed at providing support for adopters going through the approval and matching process.

It is a chance to meet likeminded adopters, share experiences and offer peer support. The group is supported by Adoption at Heart staff, which give adopters a chance to receive further support and ask any questions they may have regarding the assessment or matching process, but mainly the group and topics covered are led by the adopters attending. On occasions guest speakers are invited to attend the groups, these can be experienced adopters or professionals covering a particular adoption related topic such as attachment.

Sessions will be held virtually on the following dates:

31st January 2023: 6pm – 8pm

7th March 2023: 6pm – 8pm

2nd May 2023: 6pm – 8pm

9th May 2023: 6pm – 8pm

4th July 2023: 6pm – 8pm

5th September 2023: 6pm – 8pm

7th November 2023: 6pm – 8pm

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Post Placement Adoption Support Group

We hold monthly support groups for approved adoptive parents. They provide an opportunity for you to meet with other adoptive families and staff. The groups offer a confidential, inclusive, and non-judgmental environment where parents can discuss all aspects of adoption, share valuable experiences, build connections, and support each other. Most groups are run on an informal basis but guest speakers who specialise in child development, PACE or topical issues are periodically invited.

Sessions will be held virtually every second Tuesday in the month.

We look forward to welcoming you. The group is open to all adopters living in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton and any adopters assessed by one of these agencies previously.

10th January 2023: 6pm – 8pm

14th February 2023: 7pm – 8.30pm

14th March 2023: 10.30am – 12pm

11th April 2023: Time TBC

9th May 2023: Time TBC

13th June 2023: Time TBC

11th July 2023: Time TBC

August – no group

12th September 2023: Time TBC

10th October 2023: Time TBC

14th November 2023: Time TBC

12th December 2023: Time TBC

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553818.

Adoptee Support Group

The group is for adopted young people who live in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, and Wolverhampton. We support participants to come together and feel safe to talk about the things that are important to them with others that might have similar experiences.

It is for young people aged between 11-18; we hope to develop two groups with a group for younger children.

We meet virtually on the second Tuesday of the month at 5pm - 7pm. We hope to meet up in person for fun activities, for example, bowling, so please come along and join other adopted young people.

We are keen to ensure that the voice of young people is at the centre of decision making within the Adoption Service and so we will on occasion, consult with the group about developments to the service

It is hoped that participants will run the group (with the support of workers) to develop services that they feel meet their needs.

For more information about the Adoptee Support Group, please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 553 818.

We are looking to facilitate an older 18-25 Adopted Adult Support Group, if you would like to find out information please liaise with Yvonne Bayo Adoption Support Therapist for a discussion and details. You can contact Yvonne via the duty line on **01902 553 818**.

Stay and Play sessions

Stay and Play sessions were held virtually during the pandemic and a decision was taken by parents that face-to-face sessions were preferable.

Further Stay and Play sessions will be planned and dates provided in due course.



Family Fun Day

A survey will be sent out to adoptive families early in 2023 to gather views on a location for a Family Fun Day and any particular activities that would be of interest. We look forward to arranging this event and welcoming you to it. It will be an opportunity to meet staff from the Adoption Support Team and to build relationships with other adoptive families.

Additional Services for Adoption@Heart Adopters

Newsletter

Parents who have adopted or are adopting through Adoption@Heart will receive mailings throughout the year to let them know about news, interesting articles, workshops, seminars, groups, and other events that may be of interest.

New Family Social

New Family Social is the UK network for LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) adoptive and foster families. Adoption@Heart is a member of New Family Social, which means you are members as well. You can find out about all their services at: www.newfamilysocial.org.uk

National Association Therapeutic Parenting (NATP) Membership

The NATP provide support, education, and resources relating to therapeutic parenting, offering effective interventions, exploring compassion fatigue and the effects of early life trauma. NATP membership includes:

- Resources
- Empathic Listening
- Listening Circles
- Helpline
- Peer Support
- Advocacy

We have a limited number of memberships for approved adopters with a child/ren placed. Please speak to your allocated Adoption Support Social Worker or contact our Duty Worker if you are interested in membership (please note once our membership quota is utilised the offer will end).

Assessment of Need

The Adoption Support Services Regulations of 2005 require Regional Adoption Agencies to conduct assessments of adoption support needs when requested by an adopted child, their adoptive parents, birth parents, or former guardians.

The Assessment of Need will take account of the adoption context and consider all the developmental needs of the child including health, education, emotional needs, and contact issues.

The allocated Social Worker may need to liaise with other services or non-resident parents to gather further information.

Where the completed Assessment of Need recommends therapeutic intervention, the Social Worker will discuss a range of therapeutic services and providers with you. In the first instance Adoption@Heart therapeutic support services will be considered.

Adoption Support Fund

The Adoption Support Fund is funded by the Government and may provide specialist assessments and a range of therapeutic interventions for adopted children and families following an Assessment of Need. The Fund awards £2500 per year per child for specialist assessments and £5000 per year per child to fund therapeutic intervention.

The Adoption Support Fund makes a decision within 25 working days. However, this may take longer if further information is required

Assessments and therapy must meet the Adoption Support Fund criteria to be approved.

A review of therapy will take place periodically to consider whether the therapy continues to meet the needs of the family, if further therapy is not required, consideration will be given to how the therapy will come to an end.

If you would like to request an Assessment of Need please contact your Social Worker or call the duty line on 01902 55818 (please note there is currently a waiting list for Assessment.)

