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# Strengthening Adoptive Family Ties!

[www.coalitionofadoptivefamilies.org](http://www.coalitionofadoptivefamilies.org)

## COFAF Events!

Click the links below for more information!

Fall Series: "Growing Up Adopted From Childhood to the Teens"



This fall we are kicking off a series "Growing Up Adopted From Childhood to the Teens."

## COFAF Go Fund Me Campaign!

[www.gofundme.com/cofaf](http://www.gofundme.com/cofaf)

If you are reading this newsletter you know how vital it is for adoptive families to have access to adoption focused information, vetted resources, and support. You also know how scarce they are in Central Ohio. COFAF is an adoptive family driven startup that has been providing this kind of education, resources, and support for over two and a half years. We are the only organization in town with the exclusive focus of continuing to help families long after they adopt. Sustainability is critical if we want to continue to grow an organization that lives the experience of

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rejection, guilt/shame, grief, identity, intimacy, and control- permeate a child's development, behaviors and ability to trust. In October, how these core issues can show up in the teenage years in relationship, identity, and negative activities. Also why talking to your child throughout the years about their adoption story is important. After talking about the challenges the core issues can presents, in November we will have a "mini-fair" of some of the adoptive services offered in Central Ohio. Also for the first time, COFAF discussion groups will be presented in teams of adoption specialists and adult adoptees.

A suggested donation of \$5.00 per person is requested.

[9/15/16 "The Seven Core Issues of Adoption and Why They Matter"](#)

Presenters: Betsy Smalley and Marni Hall

10/20/16 - "Adoption Core Issues on Steroids: The Teenage Years"

Presenters: Paula Andree and Angela Christensen

[11/17/16 - "Tackling the Core Issues: Mini Fair of Adoption Services"](#)

*COFAF Facebook Page: A Source for Adoption News and Information!*

Frank and honest information and news related to adoption is rare via most media outlets- so

volunteer and receive no outside money. If you know "why attachment matter", if you want to learn more about "how trauma is part of adoption", or you just want to be around other that "get it" then we hope you will help us grow this organization and be generous to our GoFundMe campaign.

Explaining what it feels like to be an adoptee and an adoptive parent—why it can be so hard—and why it matters—is strikingly illustrated through six videos we have created for the GoFundMe campaign. If you are anyone touched by adoption, these short videos go right to the heart of the adoption experience. If you are a family created through domestic or international adoption what is made clear is many of the experiences are the same. We are the Coalition of Adoptive Families and are for all adoptive families. Check out our page at [www.gofundme.com/cofaf](http://www.gofundme.com/cofaf). Please be generous and SPREAD THE WORD!

*Adoption at the Movies!*

Paula Andree COFAF Board Member and owner of the Family Attachment and Trauma Center brought to our attention a great website for families that would like to check on a movie's sensitivity to adoption related topics. Movies can also be a good starting point to openly discuss and normalize our experiences as adoptive families. Check it out at [www.adoptionlcsw.com](http://www.adoptionlcsw.com).

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adoption experience. Visit the Coalition of Adoptive Families Facebook page and “like us” to spread the word!

[Like us on Facebook!](#)

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### About the Video Team!



The videos on our GoFundMe page and soon to be on You Tube were created by an incredibly talented team of Angela Christensen, Lizzie Jackson, Moriah Miller-Gnann, and Delaney Morphew. Lizzie is a student at CCAD and she and the college generously contributed their talent, equipment, and facilities to making these videos. We could not have done it without them. Moriah is a student at OSU and was the creative mind behind the scripts and was one of the illustrators. Delaney a student CSCC also illustrated and found the soulful music.

Also a big Thank You to Angela Christensen, Lee Ann Swick, and Mesi Morphew for their honesty and openness about their adoption experience as adoptees and adoptive parents. This whole team contributed countless volunteer hours over their summer vacations to make this project happen—we are incredibly grateful for their time and talent. Finally a shout out to Karen Durand District Director, Southern OH and our SCORE Mentor for her support and ongoing guidance.

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### What We are Reading

THE PRIMAL WOUND: UNDERSTANDING THE ADOPTED CHILD, psychologist Nancy Newton Verrier posits that when there is a postnatal separation between an infant and its biological mother, as is frequently the case with adoption, the resultant experience of abandonment and loss is "indelibly imprinted on the unconscious mind of the child," causing what she terms the "primal wound." She writes that for the

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explores the implications of this primal wound, which can manifest in emotional and behavioral issues including issues of intimacy and control, fear of rejection, guilt, and shame. Among her observations are the fact that many adoptees, especially those who are more prone to compliance than acting out, experience wide-ranging physical symptoms, the most common of which are stomach aches and gastro-intestinal problems. I was disheartened but interested to read that many adoptees are unconsciously wary of women, whom they may regard as abandoners unworthy of their trust, that they may feel more comfortable with and closer to their fathers.

Verrier was motivated to write the book because she observed many of these issues in her own daughter, whose behavior, despite being adopted at three days old, belied the widespread beliefs that bonding begins at birth and that a newborn is unknowing, a blank slate. Citing classic attachment studies by John Bowlby and D.W. Winnicott, Verrier rejects the fantasy that the joining together of adoptee and adoptive parents will automatically produce a happy solution for everyone. She insists instead that it is simply not possible to sever the tie with the biological mother and "replace" her with another caregiver, now matter how loving, nurturing, and well-intentioned that person may be. In short, she feels that too often, adoptive parents and even professionals greatly underestimate the significance of the original trauma (which indeed it is), or primal wound, and its impact on the adoptive family system.

Although some may find this an uncomfortable and difficult read, one lacking any rosy prognosis or clear-cut solutions, I appreciate the author's courage and willingness to confront the complex realities of adoption. Especially as an addition to the growing literature on trauma, I would highly recommend Verrier's book.

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