



ADOPTER SUPPORT AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

2021



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 on 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's support group.
- Family Fun days and Social events that take place throughout the year
- Regular Newsletter.
- Assessment of Adoption Support Needs.
- Parenting support on adoption issues.
- Therapeutic parenting course for adopted child who have experienced attachment difficulties and complex trauma
- Access to a range of therapeutic interventions including Theraplay, DDP, and Play Therapy.
- 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 post adoption contact.
- LGBT+ adopters can become individual members of New Family Social for free
- Free or reduced Adoption UK membership depending on your circumstances

TRAINING COURSES AND 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 and how to tell difficult stories well 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 about adoption.
- To consider age-appropriate explanations linked to a child's developmental stage and 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 order to develop a strong sense of identity and positive self-esteem.
- To consider some of the practicalities and potential difficulties involved in undertaking life story work.

The course will be held virtually on.

- **29 January 2021 10:00am -2:00pm**
- **6 May 2021 10:00am -2:00pm**
- **8 July 2021 10:00am -2:00pm**
- **4 November 2021 10:00am -2:00pm**

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your social worker or call the duty line on 01902 55 3818.

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.
- The session will cover: The relationship of Theraplay® to attachment theory and why play is so important; The principles of Theraplay®; Using Theraplay® activities at home
- We will also provide you with a 'tool kit' of Theraplay® activities and materials to use at home.

The sessions will be held virtually on.

- **29 March 2021 @ 10:00am – 1pm**
- **25 June 2021 @ 10:00am – 1pm**
- **21 September 2021 @ 10:00am – 1pm**
- **16 December 2021 @ 10:00am – 1pm**

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your social worker or call the duty line on 01902 55 3818.



Introduction to Parenting Teenagers

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

This one-day workshop run 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.

- **April 22, 2021 @ 10:00am-2pm**
- **June 16, 2021 @ 10:00am-2pm**
- **September 24 @ 10:00am-2pm**
- **December 13th @ 10:00am-2pm**

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your social worker or call the duty line on 01902 55 3818.

Friends and Family Training

This half-day course is designed for the relatives and close friends of A@H'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.

- **5 February 2021 10:00am-12:00pm**
- **4th May 2021 10:00am-12:00pm**
- **13th September 2021 -10:00am-12:00pm**
- **06 December 2021- 10:00am-12:00pm**

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your social worker or call the duty line on 01902 55 3818.



Nurturing Attachments Therapeutic Parenting Programme

We will be running a therapeutic parenting group for adoptive parents of children who have experienced attachment difficulties and complex trauma. The group will be based on the “Nurturing Attachments” programme developed by Dr Kim Golding, a Consultant Clinical Psychologist.

The group is grounded in attachment theory. It focuses on deepening the relationship between you and your child/ren and increasing understanding of how trauma impacts on your child’s development and sense of security. It presents a model which helps parent match their parenting to the emotional and behavioural needs of their child/ren. The focus is on building trust and security in the relationship with your child/ren, which will ultimately help with managing their behaviour. The overall aim is to help parents to increase their understanding of the complex emotional and behavioural difficulties children can present with and to support them in parenting their children in a way that increases attachment security and builds resilience.

Who should attend?

This group is aimed at all adoptive parents, whether you have recently been approved or have been parenting your developmentally traumatised child/ren for a number of years.

When & Where- 4.30pm to 7.30pm

The group will consist of 18 weekly sessions on a Tuesday (it is important you attend 80% of the course. The course is funded by an ASF application and will be requested as part of the child’s fair access limit, if you do not attend the and the money has been claimed the money will be lost). The course does not run during school holidays.

Dates

If you are interested in attending, please contact either your social worker or the duty line on 01902 554216. Please note there is a cost to attend the programme; but this can be met via an application to the Adoption Support Fund. You will require an assessment of need so an application can be made to the Adoption Support Fund.

Due to low take up of the course, this is currently on hold, we will continue to keep it under review and may offer the parenting programme later in the year.

Foundations for Attachment

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.

- **1st March - and every Monday until 5th May 2021 (2 weeks break due to Easter) - @ 6:00pm -8:00pm**
- **10th June - every Thursday until 13th July 2021 - @ 10:00am -12:00pm**
- **13th September - every Monday until 21 October 2021 - @ 6:00pm -8:00pm**
- **5th November - every Friday until 10th December 2021 -@ 10:00am - 12:00pm**

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your social worker or call the duty line on 01902 55 3818.



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.

Group 1 May 13, May 20, June 2, and June 10, 2021 - @ 10:00am -12:00pm

Group 2 October 4,11,18 and November 8, 2021 – @ 6:00pm- 8:00pm

A Parent self-help group will be set up following the first course.

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your social worker or call the duty line on 01902 55 3818.

Adopter support group

We hold monthly support groups for prospective adoptive parents and 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-judgemental 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 a guest speaker who specialise in child development, medical or topical issues are periodically invited.

Sessions will be held virtually every second Tuesday in the month @ 6-8pm

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your social worker or call the duty line on 01902 55 3818.

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

Adoptee Support Group

The group is for adopted young people who live in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton 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 hoped that participants will run the group (with the support of workers) to develop services that they feel meet their needs.

It is for young people aged between 11-25; we hope to develop two groups with a group for younger children and another for older teens. We meet the second Tuesday of the month at 6pm- 8pm virtually. We hope, when it is safe to do so, to meet up for fun activities, for example, bowling, so please come along and join other young people

We are keen to ensure that the voice of young people is at the centre of decision making as an Adoption service, so we will on occasion, consult with the groups about developments to the service.

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your social worker or call the duty line on 01902 55 3818.

Family Fun Day

The Family Fun day is on hold due to Covid 19 restrictions.

Stay and Play sessions

We are now able to welcome you to face to face Stay and Play sessions in an outdoor space. We have 3 summer sessions planned in the park where we can enjoy play with the children and chat for grown-ups. The 2-hour sessions will be fun, informal and overseen by one of our adoption support social workers, Marie Fields.

25th May 11:00 - meet at the bandstand at Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge.

22nd June 11:00 - meet outside the coffee shop near the car park at Baggeridge Country Park, Gornal.

15th July 11:00 - meet again at Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge by the bandstand.

During the session we will have some time in the play area, on the grass and a walk around the park.

For more information, or to attend one of the events, please contact your social worker or call the duty line on 01902 55 3818.

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 to them.

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 and can find out about all their services at: www.newfamilysocial.org.uk

Adoption UK Family Memberships

all registered prospective adopters and adoptive families will have 25% discount on their first 12-months of Family Membership, plus there is a limited number of free subscriptions. Please talk to your Social Worker to find out more.

Adopter Voice

Adoption UK are delivering Adopter Voice across Adoption@Heart, Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). Adopter Voice is a fully developed service and will be working in partnership to ensure engagement and consultation opportunities are available to all stakeholders; in this instance we are focusing on prospective adopters and those who have children placed with them through adoption.

At Adoption UK everything we do is around peer to peer support and connecting communities to facilitate this. Adopter Voice gathers views from stakeholders to share and influence service delivery with your lived experience at the heart of it.

To do this work we need to recruit Adopter Voice Champions to form a Regional Advisory Board. This group will meet quarterly, engage with peers, seek views on various topics and feedback to the agency.

