



January 12, 2024 - Core Issue# 3: Shame & Guilt

Definitions of Rejection:

- 1) To discard or throw out as worthless, useless, or substandard; to rebuff or fling back.
- 2) A perceived loss of social acceptance, group inclusion, or a sense of belonging

*Remembering to use a trauma lens and shifting the mindset of “What is wrong with you?” but “What_

Books to Discuss Adoption with a child adopted at birth:

- The open-hearted way to open adoption
- Open-eyed adoption

Toddler Adoption happened to you?” *

Rejection Child:

- “Sometimes only one of a sibling group is ‘rejected’ and placed in the system...leading to additional emotional concerns.”
- Other situations where a child might feel rejected:
 - The Orphan train lined the kids up from station to train station until ‘selected.
 - We have a teen currently who was adopted previously, and during that adoption, a biological parent was not identified. Now, as a teen, the youth is trying to locate the biological parent that was missing and is doing their own research to locate biological family members and the missing parent.
 - An adult was trying to find their birth certificate who was born in one state and adopted in another because different states have different laws around adoption and birth certificates; it was a bureaucratic nightmare. He just wanted a passport, and it was so difficult to obtain. It made me think about how not everyone goes through it, and he was experiencing a part of rejection and feelings of not being good enough. Why me?
- Other ways people protect themselves:
 - Kids can reject others before they are rejected again.



- anyway.” Especially when talking about speaking to a teacher about an issue that’s being had.

Case Study Shawna pg (69):

- Saying those things that early on without having the child very long is not the best behavior by the foster parents. It would seem like that is an adult-centric need rather than the best interest of a child need.
- What would you say to Shawna or the prospective adoptive family?
- Don’t talk about ‘adoption’ with her at this time. Go slowly. Allow her to meld into the new family.
- For the new family, I’d prepare them for the reality of the child and ask that they take time to be with them, get to know them, etc., be sensitive and understanding, and then, if things work out, approach the adoption topic. Then, when that gets tough, they’ll have the foundation to go through it and hopefully not disrupt the placement.
- Yeah, I’d agree to help the child build a relationship and assure her that they’re willing to work with her. Help the family to understand her behaviors and work with them on training and understanding behaviors.
- It so complicates the situation with the system and the goals when sometimes placements are made that this will be the permanent family, which can be done on an emergency placement, and so that is when we are seeing a lot of behaviors and challenges because the foster families haven’t had the time to build the relationships and understand the behaviors and then once there are major struggles the pre-adoptive families struggle and feel rejected, and the child is often not able to attach because they are trying to work through their unresolved grief and losses. This is one of the examples of why emergency permanency placements can cause issues.
- Also working with Shawna to understand where she is coming from, to find safe ways for her to express how she is doing, and ways for the family to talk about issues that come up with the behaviors.
- It’s really important to take things slowly; it's okay to explore adoption at a later stage.



- These kids are also moving through therapists..... They need to go slowly and carefully as well.
- Timelines are difficult, but I believe there are ways to work through that successfully on both ends. The longer kiddos are in the system, though, the much harder it is to exit them, I think.
- These are kids who have had multiple disrupted placements, sometimes due to the adults' needs and not the kids.

Rejection Birth/First Family:

- Other situations where birth/first family experience rejection:
 - Providers
 - Need always to consider Post Partum Depression

Case Study: Older Woman pg (66): What would you say to this woman?

- Things like there might have been extenuating circumstances that only that person knows. It's not necessarily a lie, but it might be something out of her control. There are different factors that could have affected her in giving her daughter up. There are so many different scenarios, being a young mom...different circumstances.
- Mom's needs versus adult daughters' needs...
- This could be generational as well; older people live in a time when this wasn't an open topic like it is today.
- It is an opportunity for this woman to claim her full story and history by working through how to accept herself.
- And this example does say why she comes into therapy over this. It's not clear what the
- It's a painful topic; the mother may not have addressed this and doesn't know how to work through it. Retraumatizing



Rejection Adoptive Family: *Rejection of adoptive parents even when adoptive families use a trauma-informed and adoption-competent lens*

- Response: This is why I always speak to my resource families about a trauma-informed lens and to try and remember that these children do not always do these things to “hurt” or with “malicious intent.”
- Response: So right, it’s not what is “wrong with you” but “what happened to you?”
- Other situations where adoptive families experience rejection.
- I have found that it can be very difficult to help an adoptive parent, who comes with their own difficult history, understand your thoughts. What happened to you?
- It’s a good reminder for us as professionals working with families to check our own judgment of parents when they are struggling.
- I have an adoptive family who has adopted and taken in children at the request of their children.
- When I think of this, we work with potential expected parents, and with our adoptive parents, we provide upfront education, which includes talking about the primal wound, and a lot of parents get worried and anticipate rejection. So, a lot of our families almost set themselves up to be rejected because they have read about primal wounds, and they are ready to be rejected by the baby before the baby is even born.
- Primal Wound Definition: Babies start bonding with their mom in the womb, and even when adopted at birth, there is a break of attachment, which can cause confusion and struggles regarding attachment for the child being adopted.
- I think it's important that this kind of rejection can be true for both relative adoptions and non-relative adoptions.
- Too many...some kids did not end up well ultimately. These you do not forget.



- The history of the child's life can be intimidating for others to comprehend. The child may use this history as a safety net to not allow others to get close to them for fear of more rejection or that they are not good enough to be loved fully.
- Well, we have a family whereby the youth broke the father's golden rule to have to leave the family. The mother disagreed but chose her husband of the youth. Heavy sigh.
- We have kinship adoption and have definitely run into the complexities of families rejecting the situation even when the child is still within the family.
- This was my experience as an adopted child being adopted into my maternal side of the family.

Case Study Tyler and Thomas pg (74): What would you say to Tyler, Thomas, and even Michael?

- Recognizing and talking about that there is still loss involved in that. And it is powerful to acknowledge and put that lens on when working with them.
- It seems like the adoptive parents should've had these expectations in place before the adoption.
- It all comes to education and preparing the parents for these behaviors.
- The dads needed education prior to taking on this child...totally normal behaviors, expected, help the parents understand.
- I worry about some of our families who, especially around disciplinary issues, are going to change their parenting because now they are not licensed foster parents and don't have to follow those regulations.
- Me too, Sara. It comes down to a real understanding of the impact of trauma on children and changing your parenting accordingly. If it isn't internalized, it is easy to revert back to what we know and the way we were raised.
- The family would benefit from continued family therapy post-adoption.
 - Applications of Knowledge is Wisdom
- Why is it essential to identify and sit with rejection before moving into grieving and letting go?



- I always feel like the more you can identify, label, and acknowledge, the more you can own it. And you can't move through the first part until you own it and work through it.
- There is trauma associated with it, and it can last for a long time into adulthood if not addressed, recognized, and understood. Knowing when it started has lasting effects. Once you can identify it and understand what it is, it allows you to grieve and let go. That may take a long process.
- It is important to validate those feelings to honor your core beliefs and learn greater self-awareness for healing. It enhances your new experiences and gives you confidence in the next steps.
- Rejection seems like the opposite of that connection. I feel like grief is internal, but rejection is very much about relationship and connection piece. We need to work through that rejection of relationships if we are going to do the opposite of connect. And help youth and adults have those healthy relationships. They have to work through those feelings of previous relationships.
- I think the more you can sit with this, the more you can come to some piece and do not have to keep carrying around the weight.
- For many people, when we experience that type of negative feeling state or our needs are not met, we want to move through it quickly without fully understanding it. I think it's important to remember that whatever you do to get out of that, don't do it. Give it a week, and don't do it. Sit in, find out what negative core belief it is, push through to process, and then work to move forward.
- Part of the healing process
- As a worker, you need to show that you can sit in the feelings of rejection with the child, acknowledging it with them, honor it, not run from it, and not try to 'fix' it.
- Being empathetic.
- Recently, I had an experience involving rejection, and it took me about 3 months to fully get through it. Once I was able to, the outcome has been peace, tranquility, and a higher level of understanding.



- How would you begin the conversation around rejection while balancing the motions and resistance?
- Offer to sit with the person in their grief. Show empathy, compassion, and validation. This could be heavy. I like to offer small moments as they are ready to address different elements as they appear.
- I think the lifeline tool you illustrated could provide an opportunity to look back over history. You don't even need to call it rejection, but life events open the door to frame.
- The kids are showing us the way ... different ages and developmental stages... the kids will show us if we pay attention and honor where they are and where they are coming from.
- Lived experiences is the term I use.
- It comes with trust. That is huge as some people are more open to others and would normally be like their therapists.
- So, I think there are trust issues that you can balance once you earn it. What are things they have control over?
- It is important to have the facts of the kids' travels in foster care that led them to this place if you can get it. Not to beat them up with it.... just that you know where they have been and what they have experience.