



WEBINARS

Supporting Adoptee Strengths & Struggles During COVID-19

Presenter: Dr. Chaitra Wirta-Leiker

Explore the unique ways adoptees are being affected by COVID-19 & social distancing measures, guided by The Seven Core Struggles & Maslow's Hierarchy. Learn how the pandemic may activate strengths & struggles for adoptees & develop strategies to offer support as a caregiver, both during the crisis & after the return to a "new normal."

Presenter: Dr. Chaitra Wirta-Leiker is a licensed psychologist, international/transracial adoptee & adoptive parent specializing in providing mental health support for adoption, trauma & racial identity work through her private practice in Denver, Colorado. She is a frequent speaker & trainer at adoption agencies, camps & conferences throughout the U.S. & is the author of "The Adoptee Self-Reflection Journal," as well as the creator of the National Adoptee-Therapist Directory.

Black Identity

Webinar 1: Who Am I? Racial Identity Development in Youth

Presenter: Dr. Apryl Alexander, Graduate School of Professional Psychology, University of Denver

Description: Everyone can recall the awkward periods of childhood and adolescence and trying to discover your own identity. Developing one's racial identity can especially be difficult given all of the forces (i.e., family, peers, media, institutional racism) that children encounter. Racial identity development models explain how children and adolescents navigate these stages and challenges that arise. We will discuss ways to foster healthy development.

Presenter Bio: Dr. Apryl Alexander is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Professional Psychology at the University of Denver. She received her doctorate in clinical psychology from the Florida Institute of Technology with concentrations in forensic psychology

and child and family therapy. Dr. Alexander's research and clinical work centers around violence and victimization, human sexuality, and trauma-informed and culturally informed practice.

Webinar 2: Black Identity in Schooling

Presenter: Asia Lyons, Lyons Educational Consulting

Description: Our children spend the majority of their lives in school. What racial situations will your child need to navigate in school in the K-12 or higher education space? As the parent of a Black child, what conversations will you need to navigate about being Black in school?

Presenter Bio: Asia Lyons is the founder and lead consultant for Lyons Educational Consulting LLC, a consulting and coaching firm that supports schools and other non-profits in their creation of sustainable equity and inclusion initiatives. Prior to devoting herself to Lyons Educational Consulting, Asia served as a K-12 educator and equity coordinator in Cherry Creek School District for over 10 years. She also served as the school-partner specialist at RISE Colorado, an Aurora-based non-profit, working with schools and other non-profits across the Denver Metro Area to provide communities resources to support the closing of the access gap for children of color. In addition to coaching and consulting, she is an adjunct instructor in the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Colorado Denver. She is also pursuing her doctorate in Leadership for Educational Equity focusing her research on the ways that racism-related stress crosses over from Black teachers to their families.

Webinar 3: But I Heard... Navigating Difficult Dialogues

Presenter: Dr. Apryl Alexander, Graduate School of Professional Psychology, University of Denver

Description: Children ask adults TONS of questions as a way of figuring out the world around them. Some are easier than others. How do you handle difficult dialogues about race? What about events in the news? We will discuss how to discuss these difficult topics in a developmentally appropriate and honest manner.

Presenter bio: Dr. Apryl Alexander is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Professional Psychology at the University of Denver. She received her doctorate in clinical psychology from the Florida Institute of Technology with concentrations in forensic psychology and child and family therapy. Dr. Alexander's research and clinical work centers around violence and victimization, human sexuality, and trauma-informed and culturally informed practice.

Navigating Adoption

Webinar 1: Generational Trauma

Presenter: Lauren Fishbein, MA, RP

In this presentation, Lauren will define what generation trauma is and briefly speak about the research that brought it to light. I will talk about how this type of trauma impacts adoptee's and

why it is important for parents to understand the history of whichever country their child came from. Lauren will speak to the role of epigenetics and how we are able to work with this type of trauma in the present moment.

Presenter Bio: Lauren Fishbein is a transracial, international adoptee from Temuco, Chile. She is a Synergetic Play Therapist who spends her time working with and supporting adoptees and their families. When it comes to working with adoptees, Lauren comes from a holistic background and considers the entire picture instead of just looking at behaviors. Her studies on implicit memory have shaped her work and she believes understanding an adoptee's first 18 months of life can provide a key when it comes to healing implicit trauma.

Webinar 2: Implicit Memory & Adoption

Presenter: Lauren Fishbein, MA, RP

In this workshop Lauren delves into implicit memory and how the womb-2 years of life create a blueprint for an adoptee. You will learn about how this impacts a child's brain and nervous system and how to support your child through tough moments. Lauren ties it together with the technique Connect and Redirect by Dr. Daniel Siegel and Dr. Tina Bryson so you have a tool to work with immediately!

Presenter Bio: Lauren Fishbein is a transracial, international adoptee from Temuco, Chile. She is a Synergetic Play Therapist who spends her time working with and supporting adoptees and their families. When it comes to working with adoptees, Lauren comes from a holistic background and considers the entire picture instead of just looking at behaviors. Her studies on implicit memory have shaped her work and she believes understanding an adoptee's first 18 months of life can provide a key when it comes to healing implicit trauma.

Webinar 3: Adoptees and Social Media: Navigating Emerging Issues

Presenter: Emma Sower, BS, Masters in Forensic Psychology Student, University of Denver

Social media has become a large factor in young people's lives. The ease of finding individuals online has resulted in difficult dialogues among adoptees and their parents. We will discuss various social media scenarios facing adoptees, including adoptees wanting to find their birth family online, birth parents or siblings reaching out to the adoptee, or the birth family contacting the adoptee's parents via social media. We will discuss ways for parents and children to navigate these conversations about social media and increase their interpersonal safety.

Asian Identity

Webinar 1: How the Coronavirus Shapes Asian Adoptee Identities - Bias, Colorblindness, and Stereotypes

Presenter: Hannah Matthys

In this session we will be examining how the Coronavirus rhetoric feeds into already prevalent stereotypes about Asians. We will begin with a deep dive into understanding implicit bias, and how stereotypes now draw on prior racist conceptions of Asians from early in our country's history. We will also touch on the role of colorblindness- how it strengthens bias and silences children from talking about the uncomfortability in their experiences.

Presenter Bio: Dr. Hannah Matthys is a transracial and transnational adoptee who grew up in a small, rural community in Wisconsin. She earned her PhD from the University of Colorado, focusing on identity development, creating belonging, and equity. This helped her to develop a lens and discover the words to describe the inequities that permeated her existence. Equipped with this knowledge and expertise, her goal now is to provide access to theories and conversations that often live in the world of academia, grounding them in participants' lived experiences and centering them in growth and transformation. This expertise and experience has been developing over 10 years of teaching and facilitation around belonging and equity in college and graduate courses, conferences, and school districts, and in her own consulting company, [BeBrave Diversity](#). She now leads EDI as the EDI officer of the State of Colorado's Department of Labor and Employment.

Webinar 2: But is that Racism? – Understanding Microaggressions, Othering, Stereotype Threat, and Racial Imposter Syndrome

Presenter: Hannah Matthys

This session will be complimentary to session #1, although you can attend it standalone if unable to make session #1. In this session, we will be examining how bias and stereotypes impact the racial identity development of Asian Adoptees, and provide tools to help you build resilience with your child.

Presenter Bio: Dr. Hannah Matthys is a transracial and transnational adoptee who grew up in a small, rural community in Wisconsin. She earned her PhD from the University of Colorado, focusing on identity development, creating belonging, and equity. This helped her to develop a lens and discover the words to describe the inequities that permeated her existence. Equipped with this knowledge and expertise, her goal now is to provide access to theories and conversations that often live in the world of academia, grounding them in participants' lived experiences and centering them in growth and transformation. This expertise and experience has been developing over 10 years of teaching and facilitation around belonging and equity in college and graduate courses, conferences, and school districts, and in her own consulting company, [BeBrave Diversity](#). She now leads EDI as the EDI officer of the State of Colorado's Department of Labor and Employment.

Webinar 3: Physical Self-Image Issues for Adult Transracial Adoptees

Presenter: Mark Hagland

What are some of the challenges specific to the life journeys of transracial adoptees, relative to physical self-image? Transracial adoptees most often grow up lacking the racial mirrors needed to develop healthy physical self-image needed to navigate the world with self-confidence. Mark Hagland, an adult Korean adoptee, will share his insights and perspectives on this set of issues for transracial adoptees.

Presenter Bio: Mark Hagland is an adult transracial adoptee born in South Korea in 1960, and who was raised in the Midwest in the 1960s and 1970s. A professional journalist, he has spent 20 years in forums—both in-person and online—around transracial adoption, and has spoken on a wide range of issues of interest to the stakeholder groups in the transracial adoption constellation. He has contributed to several anthologies created by teams of adult transracial adoptees, and has participated in a wide range of conferences. He lives in Chicago.

Latinx Identity

Webinar 1: No Soy de Aqui ni Soy de Alla: Transracial Cultural Identity Formation

Presenter: Cristal Cisneros, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, University of Colorado at Denver

Adopted children are not genetically linked to their adoptive families. Comfortable acceptance of their dual identity comes from being valued and valuing in the context of celebrating differences. They have a right to feel part of and to participate in the culture that is their heritage as well as to feel part of the culture of the family of which they have become members. This webinar aims to support parents of adopted children in understanding the complex identity when children feel *ni de Aqui ni de Alla* (not from here or from there).

Webinar 2: Unpacking the Intersection Between Colorism and Racism in the Latinx Community Through the Adoptee Lens

Presenter: Astrid Castro & Jenna Brown, Adoption Mosaic

In a presentation and conversation format, Astrid and Jenna will lead a discussion to contemplate and unpack both racism and colorism in the Latinx community through the adoptee lens. Participants will have an opportunity to learn from 2 experts, through both lived and professional experiences in the adoptee community. Join us as we dive into these challenging conversations in an inviting space which allows us to join the practical with the academic.

Webinar 3: Latinx Identity in Schooling. Navigating the complexities of a PWI (predominately White institution)

Presenter: Cristal Cisneros, Graduate School of Education and Human Development, University of Colorado at Denver.

Our children spend the majority of their lives in school. What racial situations will your child need to navigate in school in the K-12 or higher education space? From Latinx fraternities and sororities, to cultural centers to cultural clubs how do you support your child seeking acceptance? Data from Moreno (2012) and Sanchez's (2011) studies suggests that Latinx sororities and fraternities provide a sense of belonging on campus and empower students to become more involved in leadership roles within the organization and throughout the campus and community.

Note: No recording available, but you will have access to the presenter slides.

Positive Racial Identity Development in South Asian Adoptees

Presenter: Katie Smith

Description: How can we as adults assist our children in developing healthy and positive racial identities? Let's look at how we can have difficult conversations with young people around racism and discrimination in a supportive and safe manner.

Presenter bio: Katie Smith, MSW has been a social worker practicing in the area of child welfare and adoptions for over 20 years. Katie is an adult adoptee who was adopted from India at eight months old. Katie lives in Colorado with her husband, children and grand-daughter and a multitude of furry family members.

The Wonderful, Wacky FASD Brain, Your Child, and You

Presenter: Cindy LaJoy

Description: Have you ever found yourself staring at your child and saying, "What in the world were you thinking?"

If so, then you might be the parent of a child with FASD.

From diagnosis, to educational concerns, to adult transition and more, bring your fears, bring your confusion, and bring your questions to this unique session. We will talk about day to day life with a very different kind of brain, how best to work with it, what are appropriate expectations, and much more. You will be challenged to think more deeply about your relationship with your child, and will be guided to find new systems and practices to be a far more effective parent. Most importantly, you will hear from someone who has been in the trenches times three, and yet whose children emerged into young adulthood with fulfilling relationships still intact, and measurable success as they move forward, despite it looking different from others their age.

Presenter Bio: Parenting and homeschooling five young adult adoptees from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, three of whom have FASD, Cindy LaJoy has learned a thing or two about how to help

your child succeed in a world that doesn't understand their unique brain. She brings a powerful message of hope, relational healing, and practical advice to those whose lives are impacted with a disability that few understand and which is seldom diagnosed properly. This 20+ year veteran of international adoption has seen it all in her own family...RAD, FASD, SID, CAPD, ADHD, and much more. Join her for a conversation about things others seldom "get" and few believe. She will answer your questions, speak from the heart, and invite you to view FASD in a new light filled with possibility rather than uncertainty.

Gender and Sexuality – Awareness and Responsiveness

Facilitator: Sorin L. Thomas, MA, LPC, LAC, CGP (they/their/them) Founding & Executive Director, Queer Asterisk Therapeutic Services

Description: If you are the friend or family member of a queer, transgender, or gender-expansive person and you are looking for ways to support them better, this webinar is for you! In this webinar, we will explore biological sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation in depth – unpacking terms like LGBT, queer, and non-binary. We will also learn about social, legal, and medical treatment options for transgender individuals of all ages, with the aim of assisting each other to better support our loved ones.

Bio: Sorin L. Thomas is the Founding & Executive Director at Queer Asterisk Therapeutic Services. Sorin is a queer and non-binary transgender Licensed Professional Counselor and a Licensed Addictions Counselor with over a decade of professional experience serving LGBTQ+ individuals and their families. Sorin also identifies as a third culture kid, raised in Spain as a US citizen.

Queer Asterisk is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization guided by queer leadership and rooted in community.

Mission: We provide counseling services, educational trainings, and community programming to promote wellness through greater connection to self and others.

Vision: We envision a vibrant community that embraces authentic expression and transformation, where individuals with dynamic and intersecting identities can thrive.

Tools to Thrive: Adoption Series

Webinar 1: An Adoptee's Perspective on Racial Trauma, Healing, and Privilege

Presenter: Corissa JS Gold, LPC, ATR, MFA

Corissa JS Gold — adoptee, licensed professional counselor, art therapist, and artist — shares how the cruelty of institutional racism, the creative process of art making, and the love of family evoked the necessary healing and clinical insights to support others in being anti-racist. She'll share her own journey, reflections, and expertise to help parents support their children as they grow.

Presenter Bio: Corissa JS Gold is a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Registered Art Therapist who has worked in the Mental Health field for over 20 years, specializing in family dynamics, adoption, multi-generational trauma and diversity education and advocacy. She brings her clinical expertise and passion for art therapy to a variety of families, children and adolescents. Corissa is also a multi-medium sculptor, using found objects, woodworking techniques, painting and photography to explore how art relates to environments, challenges cultural norms, and builds a sense of comfort. She has had various exhibits nationally and internationally, as well as permanent corporate installations. Corissa earned a Master's Degree in Transpersonal Counseling Psychology and Art Therapy from Naropa University in Boulder, CO (2003) following a Master's Degree in Sculpture from the University of Colorado, Boulder (1990).

Webinar 2: Adoption & Executive Function

Presenter: Seth Perler, Executive Function, ADHD, and 2e Coach

Seth Perler, Executive Function Coach, ADHD and 2e Coach (and adoptee), will help parents and adult adoptees understand Executive Function, so they can better support their kids and/or themselves, and position them to self-actualize and shine. This webinar will provide you with honest, practical and unconventional approaches to helping complicated, struggling students. More than 1 in 10 students struggle with Executive Function, and since many adults don't understand how EF impacts these complex kids, they often don't get the help they need.

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Webinar 3: Resilience to Caregiver Stress

Presenter: Brian D. Tallant, LPC. NADD-CC

Various forms of caregiving stress will be presented such as burnout, compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma. The impact of caregiver stress will be considered, as well as its converse, compassion satisfaction, especially as they relate to a caregiver's quality of life. A three-tiered model of caretaker resilience will be presented, containing components of physical resilience, psychological resilience, and spiritual resilience. Attendees will be given practical tools that they can use to assess their level of secondary stress, as well as tools to develop a practical yet powerful, life-long resilience plan.

Presenter Bio: Brian Tallant is a Licensed Professional Counselor and has been Program Manager of Aurora Mental Health's Hampden Youth Campus for over 23 years. Brian specializes in treating youth who have intensive mental health needs, who have experienced trauma, and

who have co-occurring developmental disabilities. Brian is a contributing member of the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress (NCCTS) Trauma & IDD Expert Panel. Brian has also served on the Board of Directors for NADD, an association for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health needs. Brian conducts workshops nationally and internationally on adapted mental health treatment for youth and caregiver resilience.

[Mini-Book Club -- So You Want To Talk About Race with Dr. Apryl Alexander](#)

Presenter: Dr. Apryl Alexander

Join Dr. Apryl Alexander for a thoughtful and interactive discussion of Ijeoma Oluo's New York Times Bestseller, *So You Want To Talk About Race*. This one-time "mini book club" is a chance for adoptive parents to delve into concepts and examples from Oluo's book, and deepen their understanding of race in the U.S. While several of the topics in Oluo's book focus primarily on Blackness, Dr. Alexander will connect these topics to the impacts on non-Black People of Color as well. Non-adoptive parents are welcome to register and join this discussion.

Presenter bio:

Dr. Apryl Alexander is a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Professional Psychology at the University of Denver. She received her doctorate in clinical psychology from the Florida Institute of Technology with concentrations in forensic psychology and child and family therapy. Dr. Alexander's research and clinical work centers around violence and victimization, human sexuality, and trauma-informed and culturally informed practice.