

National Quality Improvement Center

QIC • AG

Adoption & Guardianship
Support and Preservation

A Program funded through a five-year cooperative agreement with
Department of Health and Human Services,
Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau in partnership with:
Spaulding for Children,
The University of Texas at Austin,
The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**WORKING
WITH
DOMESTIC
ADOPTees**

An Illinois
QIC-AG Project
Presentation
August 21, 2017

Welcome and Introductions

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*Certified Theraplay® Therapist and
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Adoption Therapist for The Cradle



Mandy Jones, LCSW, JD

Certified Theraplay® Therapist and Trainer

Adoption Therapist

Mandy has worked almost exclusively with adoptive and foster families since she began her career. A certified Theraplay® therapist and Theraplay® trainer, she takes a particular interest in helping families with young children form strong attachments and work through sensory concerns. Mandy is also experienced in helping adopted individuals with identity, loss, and anxiety concerns throughout their lifespan. Through her work as a trainer, she educates parents and professionals about attachment and parenting the adopted child. She regularly presents at both local and national conferences. Mandy has also traveled with families who have adopted internationally as they embarked on homeland journeys.

Mandy earned her BA in Political Science and her BS in Psychology from Loyola University Chicago. She earned her Master of Clinical Social Work and Juris Doctorate from Michigan State University.



WORKING WITH DOMESTIC ADOPTEES

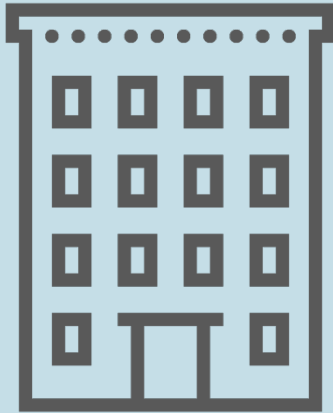
Mandy Jones, LCSW, JD

Certified Theraplay[®] Therapist and Trainer

The Cradle

Adoption Therapist

What is domestic adoption?



PRIVATE AGENCIES

- Do not engage in placing DCFS wards
- Typically placing infants (occasionally slightly older children but usually not older than two years of age)
- Licensed by DCFS and may be accredited by COA



PRIVATE ATTORNEYS

- No DCFS or licensing oversight
- Coordinate connection between birth parents and adoptive parents

Adoptive Parents: Who Are They?

- Infertility
- Loss
- “Consolation Prize”
- Same Race
- Drug and Alcohol Exposure



Domestic Adoptees: Who Are They?

- Drug and Alcohol Exposure
 - Birth Mother's Ambivalence
- Stress Hormones

Attachment Interrupters

Child Factors:

- Stressful Prenatal Environment
- Prenatal Substance Exposure
- NICU
- Other Medical Interventions
- Pain that Can't Be Alleviated
- Cradle Nursery
- Separation From Parents
- Parent Mental Health Issues
- Neglect/Abuse
- Multiple Caregivers
- Foster Care/Orphanage
- Environmental Toxins

Adoptive Parent Factors:

- Parent Mental Health Issues
- Expectations and Pressure
- Temperament of Baby
- Legal Issues
- Challenging Wait Experience
- Birth Parent Grief
- Exhaustion
- Over and Under Attribution of Impact of Adoption on your child

Transracial Adoption

- Conspicuous Families
- Always Telling Their Story

Transracial Adoption

- Current Racial Tensions
- Finding a Diverse Community

Same Race Adoption

- Defending Legitimacy of the Family

- Stigmatized in Some Cultures

- Lying about the Adoption



Shame

“There must be something wrong with me.”

The Fantasy Birth Parents

- Searching in the crowd
- Idolizing the unknown birth parent

Openness

- Mitigate pain and loss
- Not legally enforceable in Illinois
- Takes many forms
- Motivated by adoptees

Openness

- Empowering for expectant/birth parents
- Best practice

Struggles of Openness

- Circumstances change and lives move forward
- Adoptive parents are the stewards of the relationship with birth family



Search and Reunion

- The desire to search, or at least know some things, is almost always there

- Technological advances

Search and Reunion in Illinois

- <18 yrs — Only adoptive parents have access
- 18-21 yrs — Adoptee can access with AP's permission
- >21 yrs — Adoptee can search without restrictions

Empathy

- A different type of client
- Remarkably invested
- Might be hard to find

Resources

- CAFFA (Chicago Area Families For Adoption)
 - www.caffa.org
- Midwest Adoption Center
 - <http://www.macadopt.org/>
- Adoption Learning Partners
 - <http://www.adoptionlearningpartners.org/>