



Academy

Elevating Clinical Practice
In Permanency

Beneath the Mask: The Intersectionality of Adolescence and Adoption

Adolescence is a time when adoptees struggle with an extra layer of challenges related to their identity formation and integrating their sense of self as it relates to their adoption journey. Participants will explore how the typical developmental tasks of the teen years are intensified and complicated by adoption, particularly if teens are being raised by parents of a different race or culture. Participants will gain an understanding of how to assess how adoption influences the developmental process of identity formation, separation from parents, and interpersonal relationships, including birth family connections. Based on the book, *Beneath the Mask: Understanding Adopted Teens*, by author and C.A.S.E. CEO Debbie Riley, this training highlights “the six spots where teens get stuck” as key vulnerabilities around the adoption experience in adolescence. Assessment considerations and clinical strategies will be explored for application in clinical practice.

Objectives

1. **Demonstrate** the unique challenges adolescent adoptees face related to identity, separation, and belonging, especially in transracial or transcultural families.
2. **Explain** how adoption intensifies typical developmental tasks of adolescence, including identity formation and decision-making around relationships.
3. **Define** clinical strategies and practical approaches to support adolescent adoptees’ emotional and behavioral health, including work with their family

Timed Agenda

Session 1

12:00 – 12:15 Welcome and setting the stage/review of agenda

12:15 – 12:45 Review of Adolescent Development – typical development vs. adoption-related challenges

12:45 – 1:30 Review of Six Stuck Spots-part 1: *Reasons for Adoption and Missing and Difficult Information*

1:30 – 1:50 Activity: Spotlight Stuck Spot

1:50 – 2:00 Review and Wrap-up; Review agenda for 2nd session

Session 2

12:00 – 12:15 Welcome, review of first session, aha moments

12:15 – 1:15 Review of Six Stuck Spots-part 2: *Difference and Identity*

1:15– 1:45 Activity: Clinical interventions to address identity challenges

1:45 – 2:00 Review of Session 3, Questions and Wrap-up

Session 3

12:00 – 12:15 Welcome, review of second session, aha moments

12:15-1:15 Review of Six Stuck Spots-part 3: *Identity, Permanence and Loyalty*

1:15-1:45 Breakout Room practice and debrief

1:45 – 2:00 Final reflections, questions, resources and evaluation