

PARENTING THE HURT CHILD

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GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

SESSION 1:

Foreword

Preface: The Changing Face of Adoption

Introduction: Helping Your Hurt Child Heal, Grow, and Develop

What led you to come to this discussion/support group? Would anyone like to share some things about your family and your children?

What were some of your thoughts about Dr. Foster Cline's foreword? Could you relate to any of the comments he made?

If any of you adopted from another country, did you do so because you had concerns about your child's birth family finding him/her?

Is anyone biologically related to your adopted child? How has that affected your family? What are the strengths in this? Have there been any problems due to your being a 'kinship' placement?

On pages 23 & 24 there is a long list of things that the authors think are important. Do these help you look at your family's situation in a different light? Can you find a few that you can personally relate to?

SESSION 2:

CHAPTERS 1 & 2

Who Is the Hurt Child? Understanding the Attachment Cycle

Dare to Parent: Claiming Your Role in Your Child's Life

Did the discussion on pages 26 & 27 about the attachment cycle and process help you understand how your child's trauma experiences affected how they behave and relate to you and your family?

How many of you have children or adolescents who exhibit the symptoms on page 28?

Do any of your children have most or all of these symptoms? Which ones have been the most difficult to manage?

Has anyone found anything that has been helpful in either changing or eliminating some of these difficult behaviors?

If you have had your child/family in therapy, was it helpful? If so, in what ways?

What kinds of things were most helpful? Least helpful?

Did anyone's therapy seem to make things worse?

How many of you have children who have been on medication? What has your experience with medicine been like? Has your child been helped by medication?

Many current parenting books seem to be child centered. The authors believe that a parent centered-child focused family more effectively addresses the issues of 'hurt children'. Have any of you had an experience similar to that of Tammy's family on page 38? Have you felt that others, i.e., relatives, mental health professionals, or teachers have undermined your parenting efforts?

Let's talk about the fears that your children may have. How do these fears interfere with day-to-day living?

Can you relate to the list of things on page 47?

SESSION 3:

CHAPTERS 3 & 4

What Doesn't Work: Parenting Techniques Doomed to Fail

What Works: Cycling Your Way to Health and Happiness

Let's go through the things the authors list as being ineffective one by one and talk about how some of these things have worked nor not worked in your families.

REWARDS

WITHOLDING PARENTAL LOVE

PUNISHMENTS

TIME OUT

GROUNDING

DEPRIVATION

ANGER

Just as we did with the list of ineffective things, let's take a look at some things that may need to be handled in a different way than you might expect.

AVOIDING CONTROL BATTLES

CONSISTENCY ISSUES-HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE HAD TRAUMA EXPERIENCES THAN FOR OTHERS WHO HAVE NOT HAD THESE STRUGGLES?

PRAISE

FLEXIBILITY

RECIPROCITY

IN AND OUT OF THE BODY

EXPECTATIONS

NURTURING AND FUN

PRESCRIBING THE SYMPTOM

JOINING IN

PARADOX

SESSION 4:

CHAPTERS 5 & 6

Cinnamon on Applesauce: Nurturing the Hurt Child

The School Dance: Knowing When to Lead and When to Follow

How has your child's lack of care and other maltreatment affected how they respond to your attempts to nurture them? To care for them? To give them love?

Eye contact is not only important in establishing and maintaining a relationship-it is essential. Look at all of the things presented on pages 84-86 that can facilitate and improve eye contact between you and your children. I'm sure many of you have found other things to be helpful as well. Please share some of what you have done.

Research has indicated that touch is an important ingredient in the parent-child relationship. Take a look at pages 87-88. There are many things that include touch. Have you done any of these things or other things that have been helpful in getting your child to be more comfortable with touch?

Recent research has taken a look at movement. It is helpful in working with children and adolescents who have experienced trauma. Pages 88-91 have many great things to do to get you and your child moving together. What have you already done in terms of movement and other interactive activities?

Many children who have had early childhood trauma have food issues. Many families try to change these via a control strategy-almost guaranteed to fail. Check-out the things you can do with food that may 'tame' the food obsessions that so many of your children have. We can find these on pages 92-96.

Language is so important in family relationships. What have you done to help bridge communication gaps? Do you think that some of the things on pages 97-99 would help you and your child?

Sometimes the traumatized child energizes the family with so much anger that we forget what it's like to have fun. If families don't have fun, they will continue to struggle and suffer. Pages 101-104 offer you many suggestions that may help lubricate your path to a more fun life. Which ones might be feasible in your family?

So many of you have daily struggles with school issues. They include: homework problems, behavioral problems, IEP problems, teachers not understanding the dynamics in your family. Let's spend some time discussing the kinds of school issues you face or have faced.

What are your thoughts regarding communicating with the school (pages 119)?

What have your experiences been like in trying to share information about your child and your family's unique situation?

What have been your experiences with special education-IEP's and 504 plans?

Homework struggles are very common. What have you done about homework? What are your thoughts about the homework ideas on pages 133-134?

What are some of the roadblocks(pages137-138) at school that you have faced?

How many of you homeschool? How's that working?

What are the advantages to homeschooling? The difficulties?

SESSION 5:

CHAPTERS 7 & 8

Rough Waters: Surviving When It Feels Like Nothing Works

Life Preservers: Discovering Help from a Variety of Resources

So many of the difficulties you experience are the result of psychological intersections that you share with your child. Look at the self inventory on pages 142-143. Can you relate to any of these issues?

On page 145, there is a conversation between Denzel and his parent. Does this sound familiar to you? What have you done to get out of these seemingly 'no-win' situations?

Do you feel your child is 'stuck'-so to speak-at an earlier developmental level? What have you done to help them move forward.

Take a look at all of the issues identified in this chapter. Let's talk about them.

Financial Issues

Education

Social Security

Therapy

Speech

Occupational Therapy

Siblings

Marriage

Taking Care of Yourself

Infertility

Disruption

Cultural Issues

Homeland Tours

Holiday Horrors

Birth Family Contact

SESSION 6:

CHAPTER 9:

Finding Useful Help: Connecting with the Right Therapist

Have you been able to find mental health professionals who have been helpful?

What have they been able to help you with?

Are you included in the therapeutic process?

Has there been a 'splitting' process in your family due to therapy? If so, what have you done to address this?

On pages 174-175, there is a list of comments about therapy. Let's look at these. What are your thoughts?

SESSION 7:

CHAPTERS 10, 11, & 12

Ask and Expert: Questions and Answers About Hurt Children

Parents and Children Talk Back: Stories from Those Who've Been There

Authors Smorgasbord: Reprinted Articles About Hurt Children

We can have a very open discussion about these chapters.

Are there specific things in them that were helpful to you? Please share what your thoughts are.

What stories did you relate to most? Do you have similar stories?

In the Authors' Smorgasbord, what did you think of the letter regarding use of the acronym 'RAD'?

How have you used respite? Has it been helpful?

What did you think of the Ten Top Tips for Internationally Adopting Families? Were they helpful to you? Are there other things you'd recommend?

What would you suggest for future discussion groups?

Has this been helpful for you and your family?