

# Adoption 101

Heartland for Children's  
Trauma Informed, Relationship Focused Adoption Training

Class One



Heartland for Children is a community-based care lead agency  
contracted with the Department of Children and Families.

## Welcome To the start of your adoption journey!

- Ground Rules
- Purpose of Adoption 101 Training
  - Provide **information** related to public adoption.
  - **Prepare** you for adoption and provide information about benefits, resources, and support available to you.
  - **Education** to families regarding trauma, the impact of trauma over the lifespan, and best practices in raising a child who has been through trauma including Trust-Based Relational Intervention training. We will utilize group activities, watch videos, and assign homework to further expand on your education being provided.
  - **Assessment** is a big part of the adoption journey. We will challenge you to assess your own motivation for adoption and honestly assessing your ability to provide for the long term needs of a child who has come from a hard place.
- Introductions!



## Adoption is not a single event, but a lifelong commitment

- The decision to adopt is not one to be taken lightly. There are many factors to consider including:
  - *Long term ability to provide for a child's current and projected needs*
  - *Support system*
  - *Motivation to adopt, including evaluation of expectations*
  - *Impact of adoption on family dynamics*
  - *Personal resolve and healing of own trauma and/or loss history*
  - *Openness to parent in a "non traditional" manner based on research findings on the effectiveness of relationship based parenting for children from hard places*



## Families who may struggle with adoption....

- Unresolved loss or trauma
- Possessiveness of the child
- Desperation for a child, resulting in unrealistic expectations or attempts to fill a void
- Need for power & control
- High stress and anxiety
- Desire to "mold" and "remake" a child to fit in their family
- View emotional and behavioral needs as "willful" or "intentional" rather than a trauma response



## Characteristics of Successful Adoptive Families

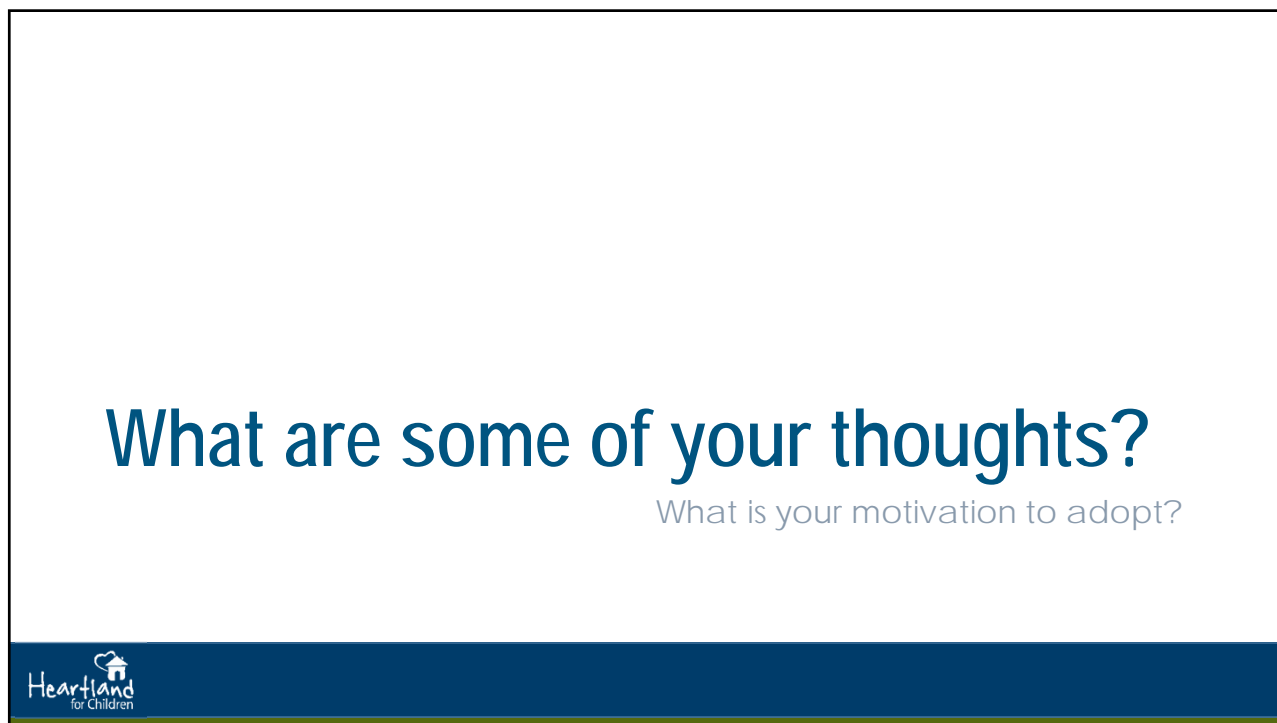
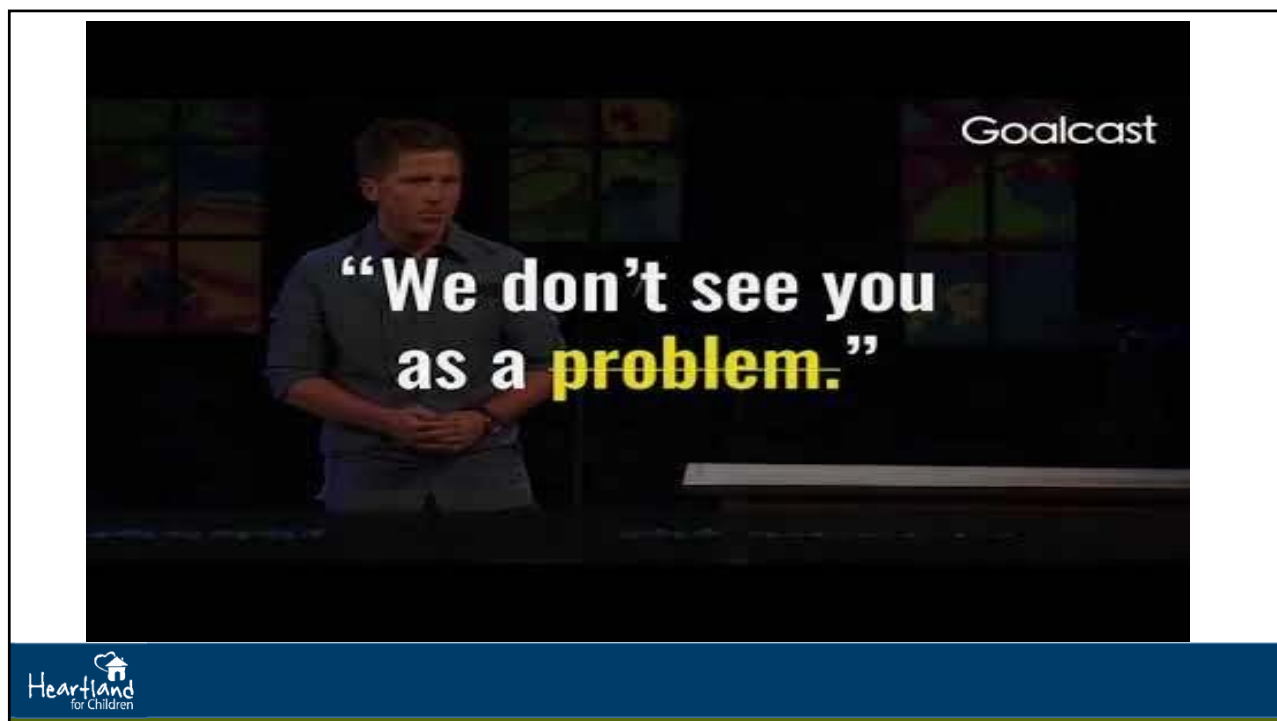
- Satisfied with their lives & able to meet own personal needs
- Resourceful & have a strong support network
- Flexible & has realistic expectations
- Likes to give & help others
- Tolerant of loss, anxiety, & rejection
- Able to delay parental gratification
- Involved in the community
- Accepting of the birth family and able to talk positively with the child about their birth family
- SELF CARE! *“ When the caregivers and parents are healthy and strong, their capacity to be present, patient, positive and nurturing is enhanced. When the parent’s needs are unmet, it is unrealistic to ask them to play a central role in the child’s healing process.” Dr. Bruce Perry*



## We all want long term success!

- Motivation, support system, self care, and viewpoint regarding trauma and trauma responses are key factors in your ability to provide healing, therapeutic parenting and unconditional commitment!
- Watch this powerful message from Josh Shipp.....  
*(share this with your support system to help them understand!)*





# Let's talk about attachment

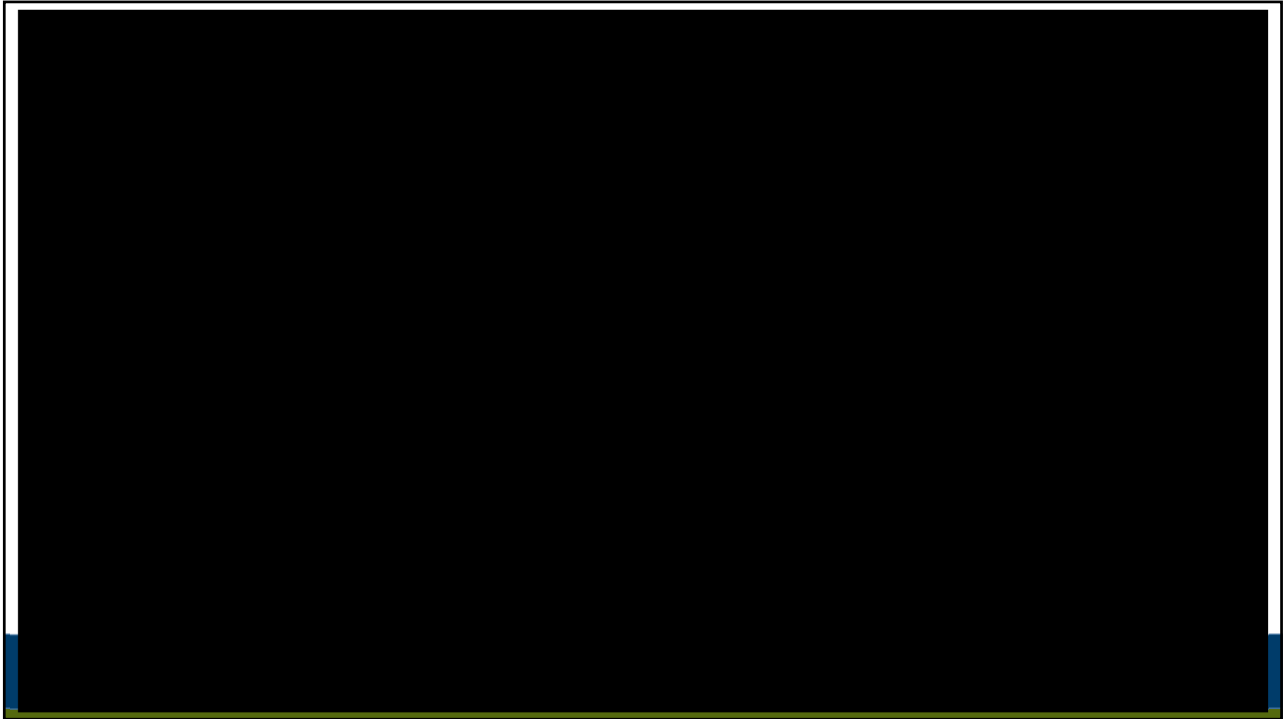
- Attachment experiences are vital to human development and survival!
- “The need for connection is so basic and primal, it operates well below conscious awareness, but influences almost everything that we do. This is why intense feelings, arguments, and strong pressure to either move away from or cling to close relations seem to come from nowhere”.



# Attachment Style

- Did you know that attachment is generational? The mother's adult attachment style matches the child's attachment style 81% of the time! *Thus, the greatest predictor of a child's attachment style is by looking at the parent's attachment style!*

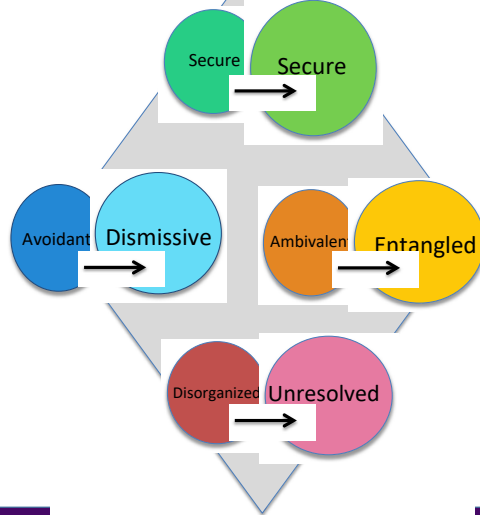




## Ask yourself Where you fall:

- How comfortable am I.....
  - Giving care to others
  - Receiving care from others
  - Negotiating my needs
  - Comfortable in my own skin

Infant → Adult Attachment Classifications



## Secure or Earned Secure Attachment

- Caregiver style: Takes delight in their children and meet needs when the child is in distress.
- As adults: High competence, ask for help when needed, give help to others easily, persistent, well liked, creative, trusting, negotiates needs, values relationships over items, socially competent, comfortable in their own skin.

# Avoidant....Dismissive

- Caregiver style: Consistently does not delight in their children and do not meet the children's needs when they are distressed.
- As adults: Prefers to be alone, values objects over people, masks vulnerable feelings, less likely to ask for help when needed, seek attention through negative behaviors, uncomfortable with intimacy, difficulty accepting help when distressed, blame others when things go wrong.



# Ambivalent.... Preoccupied/Entangled

- Caregiver style: Inconsistently delights in their children and responding when their child is distressed.
- As adults: Demanding, clingy, needy, difficult to satisfy, low tolerance for frustration, unpredictable, uncomfortable in their own skin, fearful and unsure in relationships, easily upset, and sensitive.





# Disorganized... Unresolved

- Caregiver style: They consistently respond to their children in a way that is fearful to their child
- As adults: Chaotic, unpredictable, escalates quickly to fear, aggressive, violent outbursts, withdrawn, unresponsive, confusion when responding to others, less likely to accept comfort from others.

# Mindfulness

- Best thing you can do as a parent is to make sense of your own life first and be aware of your own attachment style and how it affects you, as well as your parenting!
- **HOMEWORK!**
  - *Identify at least 3 things that dysregulate, trigger you, or cause you stress*
  - *Identify at least 3 ways in which you typically respond when dysregulated/triggered/stressed*
  - *Identify at least 3 ways that you can self-regulate in times of dysregulation*
  - *With this mindfulness of identifying this about yourself, do you feel it may create change in the way you typically respond to dysregulation/stress/triggers? Please describe.*



# Change is Hard!

- We need to have compassion for ourselves, be open and honest with ourselves, and ask for help when needed.



# Adoption Paperwork & Homework

Email all homework to: [amj@heartlandforchildren.org](mailto:amj@heartlandforchildren.org);  
[pross4@heartlandforchildren.org](mailto:pross4@heartlandforchildren.org)

\*Class homework is required to receive your certificate.

\*Unmatched Families: Home Study Binder is NOT required for your class certificate, only to obtain your home study.



# Thank you!

## Contact information

- Adoption Specialists:
  - Paige: 863-224-9844, [pross4@heartlandforchildren.org](mailto:pross4@heartlandforchildren.org)
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