

Questions for Adoptive Parent Focus Groups

Topic: Impact of Adoption on the Relationship of Parenting Partners

We know that there are many rewards to adopting a child from the child welfare system. Just as there are rewards, studies tell us that there are also challenges to the relationships between spouses/partners who are adoptive parents. This focus group would like to look at the rewards and the challenges to the relationship of parenting partners who are raising children from the child welfare system.

Tell me a story about a time (or times) when adoption strengthened your relationship with your spouse/partner.

Describe how you and your spouse/partner worked especially well together.

What did you do? What was your role in achieving this?

How did you feel during this experience?

What kinds of things have you done to connect, grow together, or remain close as a couple since you adopted? Where did you learn how to do these things?

What, if anything, surprised you about the way adopting your child impacted your marriage/relationship?

Describe an incident when you felt your relationship was challenged by the adoption of a child from the child welfare system.

In what ways was your relationship challenged?

How did you feel during this experience?

Who helped you get through this experience?

Think about your marriage/relationship before you adopted your child. Describe an incident where you felt especially close to your spouse/partner.

How did you feel during this experience?

If there was a challenge you faced together, what did you do to overcome it?

Who helped you overcome it?

If you had three wishes for improving your relationship with your spouse/partner since adopting, what would they be?

(If the person's partner is not there, may want to follow up with these questions:

How do you think your partner's wishes would be the same?

How do you think they would be different?)

Topic: Preparing for Adoption as a Couple

The process of adopting children from the child welfare system can be challenging for families. There are many things to learn and many processes to go through. Sometimes couples don't think about how the adoption can impact their relationship before they adopt.

What if couples were given an opportunity to really learn how to prepare for the impact that adoption would have on their relationship?

What would be the 3 most important things for them to learn?

How would they learn those things?

What would make it difficult for them to learn what they need to know?

What would make it easier for them to learn?

Topic Area: Impact of Professionals on the Family's Adoption Experience

We know that families have all kinds of experiences when they go through the adoption process and when seeking services after adoption. Some experiences are positive and some are challenging. Adoption workers and other community helpers such as mental health professionals, ministers, physicians, and others can be one resource to help adoptive families understand what they need to know about the impact of adoption on the relationships between parents.

What is the most important thing that professionals taught you about the impact of adoption on your relationship?

What did you have to learn on your own?

Describe a situation where a professional helper really assisted you in preparing for or handling an adoption challenge as a couple.

What do you wish adoption professionals would have told you in advance of your adoption regarding how it would affect your marriage/relationship?

What is the most important thing that you learned in your adoption home-study and/or pre-service training that helped you understand how your marriage/relationship would be affected by adoption?

Describe what you think adoption professionals and others need to know in order to support relationships between spouses/partners in adoptive families?