

REACH

Resource • Education • Advocacy • Crisis Intervention • Hope

Adoption Support Services for Fresno County



Happy New Year, REACH families!

We hope you had a wonderful holiday season and were able to spend some quality time with family and friends! Though often a fun time for families, the holidays can also be a time of stress, and we hope you are taking the time to care for yourself and tend to your needs.

The end of one year and the beginning of a new year are traditional times to reflect on experiences and accomplishments and to create goals or resolutions. Our goal at REACH is to continue providing support to families through training, support groups, and individualized services. We hope you continue to access REACH services for support for yourself and your family!

Over the course of 2025, the REACH newsletters focused on parenting: Mindful Parenting, Trauma-informed Parenting, Relational Parenting, and Developmental Parenting. Moving into 2026, the REACH newsletters will be highlighting the Seven Core Issues of Adoption. Our current Winter edition provides an overview of the Seven Core Issues, with subsequent editions focusing on one core issue.

Beginning on January 12, the REACH Team will begin our nine-week virtual training series called Adoption Preparation Training (APT). Trainings will occur every other Monday evening, 6:00pm-8:00pm via Zoom. Parents can attend one or all sessions, choosing which topics are most applicable to their needs. Please be on the look out for the APT flyer in your inbox!

Please check out our Calendar page for support group and training information and dates for this quarter. If you have any questions about this newsletter or have a need you would like to discuss with the REACH team, please contact our office at 559.222.4969.

Sincerely,

The REACH Team

Fresno County Winter 2026

Inside This Issue

1. Greetings
2. The Seven Core Issues in Adoption and Permanency and The Adoption Triad
3. Activity: Core Losses Impact the Mind, Heart, and Body
4. Book Review
5. REACH Event Highlight
6. Support Group Calendar
7. REACH Services

Your Fresno REACH Support Team

Kelly Sisowath, AMFT

Program Director II

ksisowath@aspiranet.org

Jade Vang, MSW

Program Supervisor

javang@aspiranet.org

Fernando Aquino, MSW

REACH Social Worker

faquino@aspiranet.org

1320 East Shaw Ave., Suite 140

Fresno, CA 93710

Ph: 559.222.4969

Fax: 559.222.0106

aspiranetreachfresnocounty.org

The Seven Core Issues in Adoption and Permanency: Overview

By: Fernando Aquino, MSW

The Seven Core Issues were originally developed by Sharon Kaplan-Roszia, MS, in 1988. She, along with Allison Davis Maxon, later developed a guide titled *“Seven Core Issues in Adoption and Permanency: A Comprehensive Guide to Promoting, Understanding, and Healing in Adoption, Foster Care, Kinship and Third-Party Reproduction (2019).”* The Seven Core Issues include Loss, Rejection, Shame/Guilt, Grief, Identity, Intimacy, and Mastery/Control. All individuals connected to adoption and permanency will experience or face these core issues at some point in their journey. Below is a brief overview of each core issue. We will be diving deeper into each core issue in future editions of the REACH newsletter.

1. Loss

Loss is at the center of the core issues. Adoptive, foster, and kinship families have all experienced at least one major loss. When a change in permanency occurs, a major loss has shifted the future of the youth, their biological family, and their caregivers. Each member will come to an understanding of their loss as they grow, and at every developmental stage.

2. Rejection

Rejection encompasses a sense of belonging. Allison Davis Maxon shares that rejection can be “real, imagined, or implied.” It is a feeling of ostracization that can cut deep into a person’s core. Rejection can sometimes be seen in self-sabotaging behaviors.

3. Shame/Guilt

Shame and Guilt affect a person’s self-esteem and self-worth. Each member will come to terms with their experiences, over time, and as they mature.

4. Grief

Grief encompasses having difficult conversations. Each member has experienced their own type of grief and will process it in their own way. It is important that a person’s grief be recognized and acknowledged.

5. Identity

Identity explores who a person is and where they fit in. Identity is built through relationships and connections.

6. Intimacy

This core issue refers to an individual’s ability to form and maintain all types of relationships. Allison Davis Maxon and Sharon Kaplan-Roszia explain that an “individual’s most primary motivation is the drive to belong, to learn how to get their emotional needs met through human connection.”

7. Mastery/Control

Mastery is related to one’s ability to have discussions and understanding of themselves. Control is related to the ability to understand those things you can control as you grow.

The Adoption Triad and the Seven Core Issues

By Tara Soria, MA

The term “adoption triad” is used to represent the main parties whose lives are connected through an adoption: the adopted person (adoptee), the birth parents, and the adoptive parent(s). The seven core issues of adoption (loss, rejection, guilt/shame, grief, identity, intimacy, and mastery/control) affect all members of the adoption triad. The term “adoption constellation” is also used in this context to recognize the numerous other individuals who may be involved in a child’s life, such as extended family members.

The adopted person is the focal point of the triad, connecting their birth family and their adoptive family. They are uniquely affected by adoption, often dealing with a sense of loss, questions about their identity, and navigating connections with two sets of parents.

The birth parents’ experience of the seven core issues is often overlooked. Co-author of “Inside Transracial Adoption,” Beth Hall, wrote, “Birth parents are surely the least understood and most often vilified members of the adoption triad. Outsiders to the experience of adoption will often recommend that it is best to ignore or forget them, so that children will not have to face the challenging circumstances that led to their placement for adoption. But in fact, adopted people have to process the complex experience that is adoption, and they need the help of their [adoptive parents] to do so.” Adoption does not erase a child’s first family; both families are a part of their story.

Adoptive parents play a lifelong role in helping their child process complex emotions surrounding their birth family. Learning about birth parents can help a child process

feelings of grief and loss, and curiosity, in a healthy way, rather than in a way that creates shame and secrecy. Author Beth Hall further stated in “Inside Transracial Adoption,” “Children are not adopted for un-difficult or un-painful reasons. While perhaps it is true that there is a gain for all parties in adoption, the gain always generates from loss. If we are afraid of or deny that loss, we are denying the very basis of our relationship as family.”

While the dynamics can be complex and challenging, each member’s needs, feelings, and role should be acknowledged and respected for the well-being and best interest of the adopted person.

Sources: pactadopt.org, familiesrising.org

Activity: Core Losses Impact the Mind, Heart, and Body

By: Beth Hurlbert, LMFT

We have all heard “You can’t have adoption without loss.” Loss is at the core of adoption. As parents, we might experience loss through not being able to have biological children, loss of the family we thought we would have, loss of being a grandparent/aunt/uncle. As children, we experience loss through loss of a family, loss of culture/identity, loss of history. “The Seven Core Issues Workbook” by Sharon Kaplan Roszia and Allison Davis Maxon have great activities for all seven core issues of adoption. For this activity, we are going to focus on the core issue of Loss, which can have an impact on our Mind, Heart, and Body. It is common to minimize the effects our experiences have had on us. Acknowledging these experiences may take time and effort, but will help us to gain control over our lives again.

Take some time to try this activity for yourself, and have your children try this activity also. After working on the worksheet, come together as a family and share your thoughts. You might be surprised how many of them are similar. Be curious about the differences, to learn more about each other. Just remember, you are all in this together.

If you find this activity helpful for yourself and your family, try some of the other activities in the Seven Core



Mind

What is the story you tell yourself about why these losses happened to you?

Heart

What feelings and emotions are connected to these losses?

Body

Where do you feel these emotions in your body and how does your body react?

Issues Workbook in the Loss section, such as: Strengths, Myths in Adoption, Four Kinds of Loss, Loss History, Attachment, and a more in-depth look at Loss in Your Mind and Heart.

Seven Core Issues in Adoption and Permanency: A Comprehensive Guide to Promoting Understanding and Healing in Adoption, Foster Care, Kinship Families and Third Party Reproduction

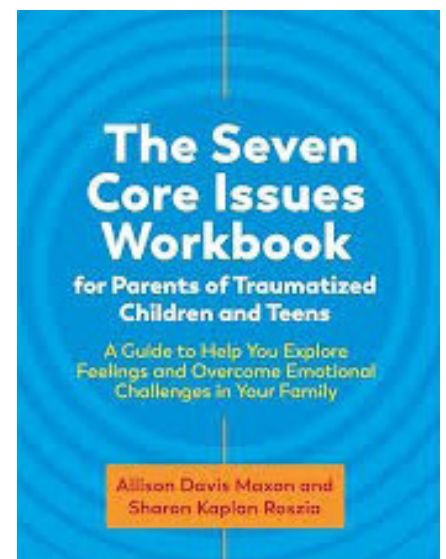
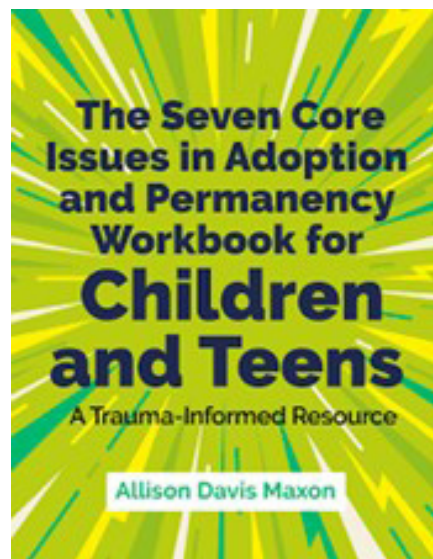
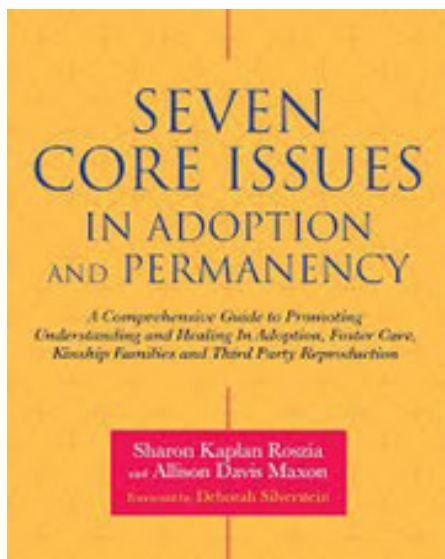
By: Sharon Roszia and Allison Davis Maxon

Review by Griselda Santillan Mejia, MA

The book, “Seven Core Issues in Adoption and Permanency: A Comprehensive Guide to Promoting Understanding and Healing in Adoption, Foster Care, Kinship Families and Third Party Reproduction” is written by highly experienced adoption experts who are passionate about helping those who have been impacted by adoption and other forms of permanency. The authors, Sharon Kaplan Roszia and Allison Davis Maxon, are nationally recognized experts in the fields of child welfare and children’s mental health. Adoption is a very complex life event. This book helps those in the adoption constellation understand, live, survive, and thrive in the world of adoption. The book reviews the seven core issues from a variety of perspectives and includes chapters that speak specifically to topics such as multi-racial, LGBTQ, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, African American, and international adoptions, as well as openness in adoption, and search and reunion. This book is appropriate for families who have built their family through various forms of permanency, such as

adoption, foster care, kinship care, donor insemination, and surrogacy.

The seven core issues of adoption are: Loss, Rejection, Shame/Guilt, Grief, Identity, and Mastery/Control. The book explains how attachment is impacted by the trauma caused by loss. It includes real examples of the impact of loss as well as the experiences of children and parents. It also speaks to strategies for coping and developing resilience. There are two workbooks designed to be used alongside this book. “The Seven Core Issues Workbook for Parents of Traumatized Children and Teens” gives parents the ability to explore their own core issues, as well as their child’s, through various activities and exercises. “The Seven Core Issues in Adoption and Permanency Workbook for Children and Teens: A Trauma-Informed Resource” is designed for children 12 and older and includes activities parents can use with their older children to help them learn to understand the impact of their loss and work through their experiences.



REACH *Event*

H I G H L I G H T



By: Maira Anguiano, MSW

National Adoption Month Event at John's Incredible Pizza

Laughter, smiles, and happy memories filled the air at John's Incredible Pizza as families gathered to celebrate National Adoption Month, hosted by the Kern REACH team. The event brought together dozens of adoptive families for a special day of connection, fun, and community.

Families enjoyed time together, pizza, games, and friendly competition with our "Find Someone Who..." scavenger hunt. As one parent shared, "Loved the scavenger hunt. It really got people talking." Another parent shared, "met new people and reconnected with others."

The Kern REACH team extends a warm thank you to all the families who joined the event and to everyone who continues to make a difference in the lives of children through adoption.



Support Groups, Trainings & Events

January

- 12 **Adoption Preparation Training on ZOOM**
(Monday) 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Module 1: Adoptive Parent Perspectives,
Redefining Family and Preparing Siblings
- 13 **Parent Café**
6:30pm – 8:00pm – ZOOM
- 21 **Support Group in Spanish**
9:30am – 11:30am – ZOOM
- 26 **Adoption Preparation Training on ZOOM**
(Monday) 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Module 2: Understanding my Child
- 27 **Support Group in English**
6:00pm – 7:30pm – In Person

February

- 9 **Adoption Preparation Training on ZOOM**
(Monday) 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Module 3: Trauma/Developmental Perspectives
- 10 **Parent Café**
6:30pm – 8:00pm – ZOOM
- 18 **Support Group in Spanish**
9:30am – 11:30am – ZOOM
- 23 **Adoption Preparation Training on ZOOM**
(Monday) 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Module 4: Attachment
- 24 **Support Group in English**
6:00pm – 7:30pm – In Person

March

- 9 **Adoption Preparation Training on ZOOM**
(Monday) 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Module 5: Correcting/Discipline
- 10 **Parent Café**
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm – ZOOM
- 18 **Support Group in Spanish**
9:30am – 11:30am – ZOOM
- 23 **Adoption Preparation Training on ZOOM**
(Monday) 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Module 6: Cultural Competency
- 24 **Support Group in English**
6:00pm – 7:30pm – In Person

REACH Support Groups for Parents In Person

Designed for adults thinking about adoption through foster care, families awaiting adoptive placement, and new and experienced resource and adoptive parents. Training hours provided. The REACH Parent Support Group is offered on the fourth Tuesday of each month, 6:00-7:30pm. Please join us to share your family's challenges and triumphs. To register, email Fernando Aquino at faquino@aspiranet.org.

Parent Café Zoom

Based on the Five Protective Factors, Parent Cafe provides an opportunity for parents to explore their strengths and learn from each other's experiences. Training hours provided. Parent Café is offered on the second Tuesday of each month, 6:30-8:00pm. via Zoom. To register for Parent Café, email Fernando Aquino at faquino@aspiranet.org and a link to the meeting will be emailed to you.REACH

Parent Support Group in Spanish Zoom

Este grupo está diseñado para adultos que piensan en la adopción, padres que esperan colocación adoptiva, y padres de niños adoptados. Horas de entrenamiento impartidas. Los enlaces de Zoom y los recordatorios se enviarán mensualmente. El Grupo de Apoyo para Padres de REACH en Español se ven en el tercer miércoles del mes. Para registrarse, comuníquese con Fernando Aquino llamanda al numero 559.222.4969 y preguntar por REACH o mandando email a faquino@aspiranet.org y se le envirara por correo electrónico un enlace a la reunión.

Adoption Preparation Training 6:00pm – 8:00pm via Zoom

Aspiranet's REACH programs offer Adoption Preparation Trainings, a free online training series to strengthen families built through foster, kinship care, and adoption, and for the professionals who support them. The series of nine modules will begin in January and end in May. Participants are free to attend sessions that are most relevant to their interests. Sessions are held every other Monday from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.





1320 E. Shaw Ave. #140
Fresno, CA 93710
(559) 222-4969
www.aspiranet.org

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U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Stockton, CA
PERMIT NO. 451



Fresno County
Department of Social Services
Clovis Campus-Building 5
380 W. Ashlan Ave.
Clovis, CA 93612



Aspiranet REACH Adoption Support Services for Fresno County

Educational/Support Groups – Monthly meetings where families are able to receive education/training and meet other adoptive families in the community.

REACH Newsletter – Quarterly newsletters filled with adoption articles, local trainings, book reviews, on-line resources and more.

Educational Workshops and Trainings – A variety of workshops and trainings will be made available.

Lending Library/Resource Directory– The REACH lending library is open and available for book review and check outs for families. A resource directory of local providers is also available to families.

Case Management – Ongoing case management is provided. REACH clients are provided with information, resource referral or other assistance as needed.

Crisis Counseling – Crisis intervention is available. Please contact our REACH staff for this support.