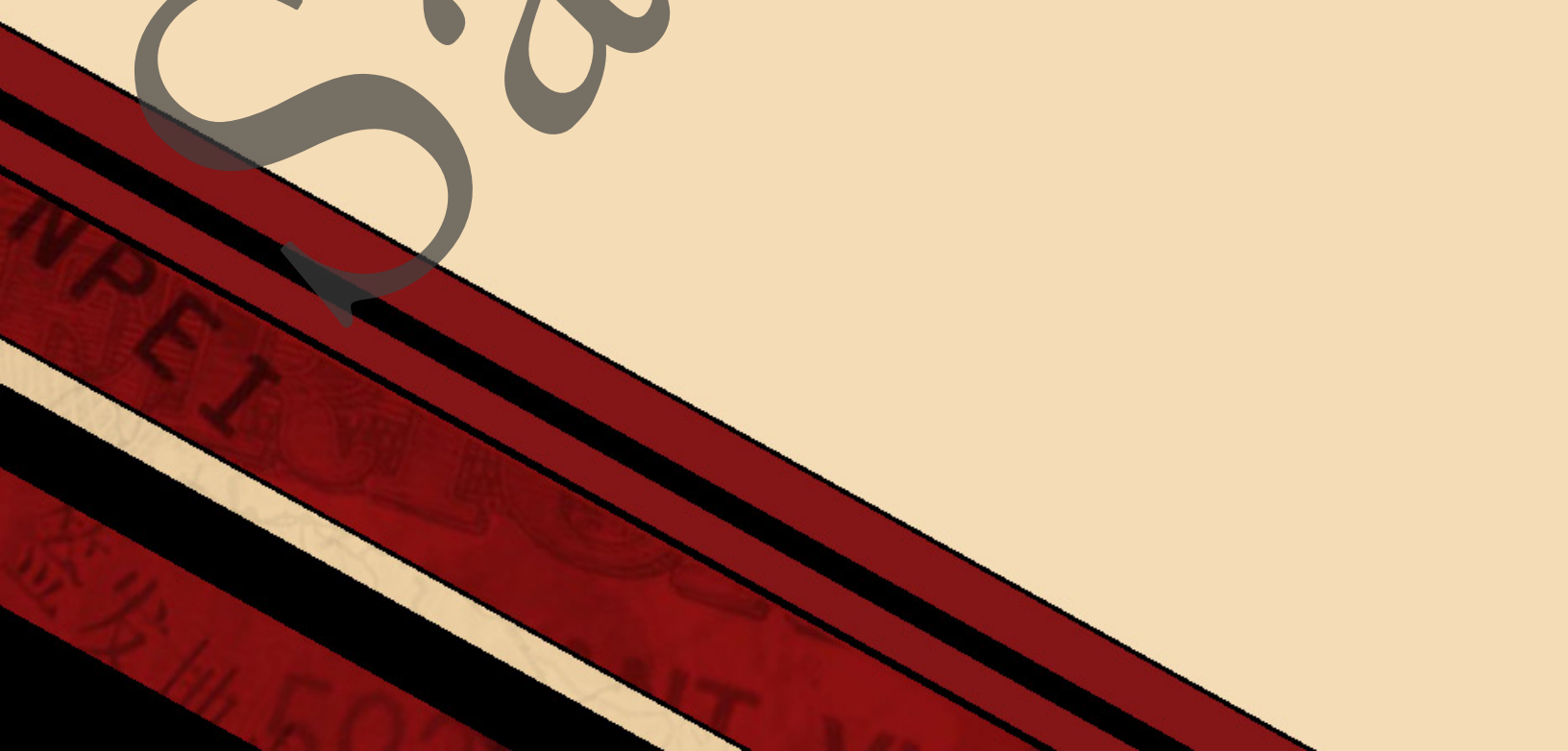


Adopted

Curriculum

authored by
Amanda L. Baden, Ph. D.



Session #1 (3 hours): Film & Discussion

Film Screening, *Adopted* (87 minutes)

Break (13 minutes)

Discussion Questions A (90 minutes)

Questions for Adopted

1. Is this a positive film?
2. What is it about this film that is not positive? Why or why not?
3. What would/could make this film positive?
4. What, if any, resolutions did you see achieved in the film?

The Fero Family (Judy, Paul, Jen, & Eric)

1. What is your reaction to and assessment of Jen?
2. What different “Jens” did you see?
3. Did you like Jen? Why or why not?
4. What was your reaction to Jen’s brother? Her parents?
5. What was Jen trying to accomplish? Do you think she made any progress?
6. What did Jen really want from this experience?
7. Do you think Jen reacted the way any person of color would have reacted in this situation? Why or why not?
8. To what do you attribute Jen’s personal problems? What issues were coming up for Jen and why?

Instructor: *Draw attention to issues of adoption, race, and identity)*

9. How did you feel about the Fero family’s reaction to Jen’s questions and feelings about her adoption? Explain.
10. Jen’s father stated “When she runs into an obstacle or prejudice she is the only one that can deal with that... and sometimes its way beyond my control and all we can do is love her.”
11. What type of messages do you think this sends to Jen?
12. What conclusions do you think Jen draws from these messages?
13. What do you think the implications of these messages are for Jen and her processing of her adoption?
14. What did you feel about Jen’s mother’s attitude about race? How do you think this has affected Jen?
15. What attachment issues do you see occurring between Jen and her mother?
Instructor: *Attachment refers to issues of bonding and caregiver responses as they affect the development of interpersonal relationship styles. These interactional styles are believed to affect later thoughts, feelings, and expectations in adult relationships.*
16. When Jen’s father was talking about his research of the Fero’s families genealogy he stated “I think it might bother her a little bit . . . I suppose if you want to let it bother you it will.” How do you think this attitude has affected Jen’s identity development?
17. Jen states “If people adopt today I expect them to do better.” Do you think Jen’s parents could have done better? Why or why not?
18. How is adoption different today? How is adoption the same? What are some available resources? How have attitudes changed? How have they stayed the same?

Session #2 (1 hour): Intentions

Companion DVD, Chapter 1, Intentions (22 minutes)

Discussion Questions B (20 minutes)

Experiential Exercise (18 minutes)

Questions, cont'd

12. Clare Timoney described infertility as “every woman’s nightmare, but its every couple’s nightmare. The idea that you can’t do that just like everyone else can do it. And it’s a tremendous sense of loss.” How have you coped with any of the issues that might be related to infertility for you?
 - a. Does the pain and loss from infertility go away?
 - b. How might pain and loss from infertility affect parenting an adopted child?
12. Besides infertility, what other kinds of loss do adoptive parents experience when choosing to parent through adoption? How do you feel about those losses?
13. Beth Hall stated that “a child is not a solution to infertility,” and Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao said, “adoption doesn’t fix infertility.” Both experts recommend that you grieve the loss prior to parenting so that they will be prepared to help their children. In what ways have you grieved? Are you still grieving?

Exercises

1. Have a debate. Split your group into two teams and assign them opposing viewpoints on viable reasons to adopt. For example, Team A supports infertility and humanitarianism whereas Team B supports selfish desires for parenting and adopting.
2. Ask them to consider these prompts: What are viable reasons to adopt? What is an altruistic reason to adopt? Is it a project? What are the implications of these choices?
3. With the instructor as the moderator, ask that the members of each group firmly hold onto the perspective they’ve been assigned.
4. Provide a 2-minute planning session, then take 8 minutes to debate. After 10 minutes, switch your teams’ supported stances and take 2 more minutes to prepare and take another 8 minutes to debate again.
5. Discuss the feelings evoked by the debate. Assess the individual members’ attitudes toward each reason to adopt. Discuss any shifts that occurred in perspectives.
6. What are your personal issues in life (both related and unrelated to adoption)? That is, what are areas that you know to be difficult for you (e.g., difficult relationship with father, lack of deep friendships, etc.)? How do these issues get in the way? Pair up with another group member (other than your spouse) and discuss these issues. Give three examples of each issue. Discuss at least three ways each issue “gets in the way.”
7. Make a list of the moments or events during which you could be reminded of your infertility. Consider daily life events (grocery store, school, work, etc.) as well as holidays, anniversaries, etc. Then list moments during which your child could be reminded of their adoption.

Infertility: A Complicated Loss

Optional Session (2 hours and 20 minutes)

Companion DVD: Infertility: A Complicated Loss (30 minutes)

Discussion Questions (30 minutes)

Exercise 1 (10 minutes)

Exercise 2 (10 minutes)

Exercise 3 (30 minutes)

Exercise 4 (30 minutes)

Adoption is a solution to parenting. It is not a solution to infertility.

The purpose of this curriculum guide is to provide a greater understanding of the issues and concerns that were addressed in the short video session entitled, *Infertility: A Complicated Loss*.

Questions

Discussion about the Video Session

1. Do you feel the infertility experience was portrayed realistically in this video?
2. Did Mindy and John share anything about their experience to which you could also relate?
3. In what ways were your experiences similar & different to the couples in the video?

In the video session, Claire describes infertility as “it’s a loss like no other,” while Pauline Boss has described it as “ambiguous loss”. Infertility has also been referred to as an “unspeakable loss”. Which term(s) do you feel best captures your experience of infertility. Why?

The Impact of Infertility on the Individual and Couple

Infertility can impact one’s sense of self; it can cause uncomfortable feelings and can change the way we view life.

Discuss how your experience of infertility has affected you in the following areas:

1. How did it affect your self-esteem?
2. How did it impact your feelings of sexual identity?
3. What feelings has infertility evoked for you and toward whom?
4. (i.e. anger, blame, guilt, envy and jealousy)
5. How has infertility affected your relationships with the following
 - a. Partner
 - b. Immediate family
 - c. Friends
 - d. Colleagues
6. How has infertility affected your belief system? (i.e. good things happen to good people, or hard work and perseverance will always pay off)
7. Describe the impact infertility has had on your relationship with your partner in the following areas:
 - a. Sense of security and trust
 - b. Your ability to communicate with each other
 - c. Your sexual relationship