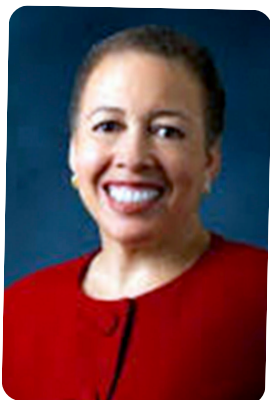




Activism in Adoption

adoption education for the 21st century



ACTIVISM IN ADOPTION IS NOT JUST AN EDUCATIONAL SERIES, BUT A *MOVEMENT* DEDICATED TO PRIVILEGING THE VOICES OF BIRTPARENTS AND ADOPTEES IN ADOPTION EDUCATION IN ORDER TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR EVERYONE IN THE ADOPTION CONSTELLATION. MOST ADOPTION EDUCATION ENDS BEFORE AN ADOPTION IS FINALIZED, BUT **WHERE OTHER ADOPTION EDUCATION PROGRAMS STOP, WE ARE JUST GETTING STARTED.**





Who We Are: On Your Feet Foundation is the gold-standard for post-placement care. With over 20 years of experience caring for birthparents, we have seen firsthand the damage caused when everyone in the adoption constellation hasn't received the education they need. We provide the comprehensive support, services, and community that birthparents deserve no matter when they placed their child for adoption and we advocate for birthparent rights and ethical practices in adoption in order to improve outcomes for all members of the adoption constellation.

Who Our Experts Are: Most adoption education silences adoptee and birthparent voices, letting others in the adoption constellation speak over them or for them. *We do things differently, because we know that when we center the needs and experiences of birthparents and adoptees, the outcomes for everyone in adoption can change for the better.* These voices are critical in changing the adoption landscape for the better, but too often, they are left out of adoption education entirely.

What You Need: Most adoption education is aimed at potential adoptive parents as they start their adoption journey, and addresses the transition of bringing a new baby into the home. *Where most training ends, Activism in Adoption starts, by covering the entire parenting journey,* from the experiences of an expectant mother considering adoption to how to help your adult adoptee successfully navigate a reunion relationship with their birth family.

Part of a trans-racial adoption? Our modules on race start with renowned expert on race in America, Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, author of the award winning book, *Why are All The Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria.* *Instead of focusing on what it is like to adopt a transracial infant, Activism in Adoption focuses on the entire transracial experience* by bringing in adult adoptees like Nam Holtz, Kevin Hofmann, and Isaac Etter, who not only recount how growing up in white families impacted them as adults but are also able to provide practical suggestions and resources for ensuring that adoptive parents are better able to address racial difference in their family and have the tools necessary to provide their child the resources they need to thrive.

Struggling to navigate a relationship with your child's birth family? *Hear birthmothers like Liz Pryor, Hope O Baker, Clemenancia Deleon, Shanyce Henley, and Cathy Crossno as they discuss what it means to place a child for adoption,* including how they came to that choice, how they experienced the aftermath of that choice, and what impact that aftermath had on their relationship with their child's adoptive family.

Worried about what happens next if your adult adoptee seeks out and finds their birthmother? Nearly all adoption education focuses on adopting a baby, but does not address the birthparent/adoptive parent relationships as that baby grows into a teen, and then an adult. *We hear a lot about preparing for openness in the early years of an adoptee's life. But what does the relationship look as the adoptee grows up? How do we prepare for a healthy open relationship through those years?* Join two seasoned birthmothers, Vicki Twomey and Jessica Figlio, who have each experienced over 20 years of openness in adoption, as they share their stories.



All of our Activism in Adoption sessions are recorded live on Zoom in front of an audience. As soon as your 30-day pass is active, you will have access to the entire catalog, including complimentary registration for any live sessions occurring during your 30-Day Access, giving you the opportunity to pick and choose the sessions that best speak to your personal needs, instead of being stuck completing adoption education in areas that do not pertain to your experiences, and you can watch them when it best suits your schedule.

It's never too late to get the adoption education you and your family deserve. Sign up today to begin your journey in adoption activism.

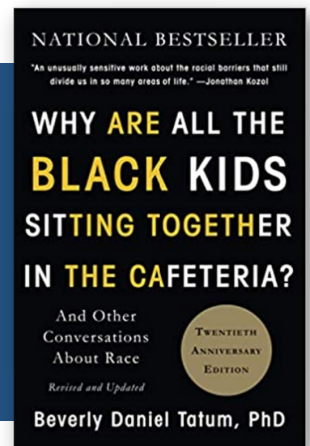
Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum: *Race and Adoption*



Along with panelists **Shanyce Henley**, a birthmom, and **Kevin Hofmann**, author and adult adoptee, **Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum**, president emerita of Spelman College and author of the best-selling book, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations about Race*, guides us in a discussion that explores what it really means to be a parent of a transracial adoptee. From acknowledging that birthparents often have fears when placing their child in a family of a different race or culture to helping adoptive parents unpack the impact of race on their children, it is an important topic for the entire triad.

As we know, racism is a huge issue for the children, for the parents, for the family, and sometimes not talked about. For young people growing up in white families, sometimes there is a real sense of distress when the topic of racism has not been easily approached in the family. If the parents are hesitant to even acknowledge racial difference, or talk about it, that puts the child in a very challenging position.

- Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum



Isaac Etter: *When Your Family Doesn't Look Like You*



Transracial adoptee **Isaac Etter** is an activist, racial bias consultant, and social entrepreneur, and the founder of Etter Consulting, whose mission is to provide trainings and services for adoption agencies that help prepare foster and adoptive parents for transracial adoption and fostering. Joined by moderator and birthmother **Shanyce Henley** and adult adoptee **Nam Holtz, LMSW** whose award-winning documentary, *Found in Korea* explores birth search, Isaac take a deep-dive into the intersection of race and adoption, providing an audience of adult adoptees, adoptive parents, and adoption professionals an unvarnished look at some of the challenges inherent in building a multi-racial family.

When we go outside of our bubble, we learn so much about the world, and a lot about ourselves.

- Isaac Etter, adult transracial adoptee



Kevin Hofmann: *Lessons From The Life: Growing up Black in White*

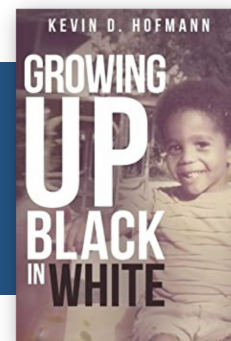


Author **Kevin Hofmann** was born into the racially-charged Detroit of 1967 to a white mother and a black father, placed into foster care, and then adopted by a white minister and his wife, the parents of three biological children.

Hofmann's talk is based on his memoir, *Growing up Black in White*, which tells his story through the lens of hope and promise, and in his session he shares the choices his family made in order to connect him to the Black community, providing adoptive parents a roadmap to help their children build strong racial identities based on self-respect instead of outside judgment.

“ People do not understand the burden of being 'the only one.' It is your job as parents to help your children and those around them manage the diversity. It should be painfully obvious by now but I will state it again: your children shouldn't be the diversity in every circle they are a part of.

- Kevin Hofmann, adult transracial adoptee



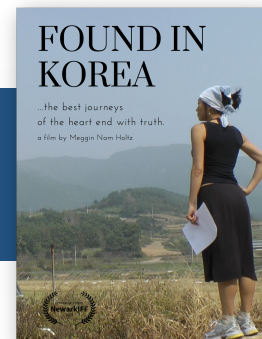
Found in Korea: A Conversation with Documentary Filmmaker Nam Holtz, LMSW



Meggin (Nam) Holtz, LMSW, a Korean adoptee, has been involved in adoption advocacy, awareness, and support for a decade. Her award-winning documentary film, *Found In Korea* 한국에서 발견된, about birth search, identity, and adoption was created to serve as a catalyst for conversations about adoption thoughts among youth and adults alike, and serves for the catalyst for this talk, in which she discusses what it is like when transracially adopted people go back to their country of origin, in search of their family and their roots.

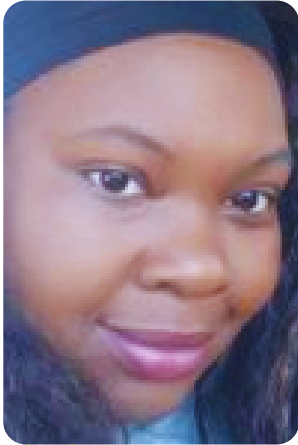
“ Educate yourself about adoption, period. You know, adoption from all voices: adoptive parent voices, adoptee voices, birthparent voices. I think that acknowledging the paradox of adoption is crucial.

- Nam Holtz, LMSW, adult transracial adoptee



RELATIONSHIPS

Shanyce Henley & Ron Lundeen: *Birthmothers & Adoptive Fathers*



In the adoption community, the phrase 'adoptive parents' is often code for 'adoptive moms,' and it's rare to hear from fathers at all, either birthfathers or adoptive dads, but a healthy open adoption requires the work to create and maintain it be done by *both* adoptive parents. Communication and understanding between birth mothers and adoptive fathers are critical components in a healthy open adoption relationship. **Shanyce Henley** is a birth mother and **Ron Lundeen** is an adoptive father who talk about their experiences in building their unique family.



On Your Feet Foundation has been an incredible resource for having honest conversations about adoption from those that personally live a daily adoption reality. Whether hearing from all members of the adoption triad or adoption professionals, I always feel encouraged when I participate in their trainings. There's a lot of work we can do to continue growing in openness and support of birth families, adoptive families, and adoptees. OYFF is laying the groundwork for growth, asking the hard questions, and providing a space for people to learn how we can help these populations thrive.

-KG, Adoption Professional, LMSW

Katy Finn: *Shifting the Adoption Narrative: The Role and Power of Adoptive Mothers*



While reflecting on her theater piece, *Placing Home*, which centers birthmother stories, **Katy Finn** unpacks the powerful role adoptive mothers can play in shifting the pervasive adoption narrative. Katy talks about her own journey in adoption to underscore why this shift in thinking is so necessary, and addresses how both prospective adoptive parents and adoptive parents can take clear action towards empowering birthparents and adoptees to bring their stories to the forefront of the adoption landscape.

Fantastic information and speaker!! Thank you for creating this type of content.

-Adoptive Parent



Cathy Crossno: Navigating Adoption Relationships from a Birthmom Perspective



Birthmom **Cathy Crossno** tells the story of how she came to place her daughter for adoption, and how she was able to build a strong relationship with both her daughter and her daughter's adoptive parents. Cathy acknowledges the complexities of relationships within the adoption triad, while highlighting ways to honor birthparents in closed adoption and finding positive ways to navigate open adoption relationships. The discussion includes information for birthparents on how they can advocate for their wants and wishes and will give the audience the tools to help adopted children build a strong sense of self-identity.

I love that a birth father would like to be a part of the story and I don't see how it would look any different than a birth mother, right? A birth father is still grieving, a birth father is still trying to figure out where they fall into place, and so again, I think with open honesty and love, just like a birth mom, a birth father can fall right into the same relationship with that child.

- Cathy Crossno, birthmom

Hope O Baker & Nam Holtz: Improving Experiences for Expectant Moms Considering Adoption

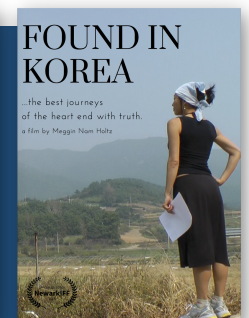


Hope O Baker, birthmom and author of critically acclaimed memoir, *Finding Hope: A Birthmother's Journey into the Light* and **Nam Holtz, LMSW**, adult adoptee and award-winning documentary filmmaker, *Found in Korea*, discuss how we can improve outcomes for expectant moms considering adoption. When we improve experiences for the expectant mom, we reduce trauma for the child, set the foundation for better relationships and improve outcomes for all members of the triad.



Someday, you are going to have to tell your child the circumstances surrounding their adoption. Are you going to be able to tell them that you did everything you could to make sure their adoption was ethical? That you made sure that their birth mother had access to the resources she needed to heal?

- Hope O Baker, birthmom



Kirsta Bowman: Advertising Children on Social Media: Ethical Concerns in Rehoming Practices

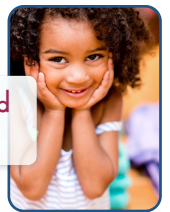


Kirsta Bowman, an adult adoptee well-known on social media for her thoughtful and nuanced videos discussing the adoption landscape, joins us to discuss her research into unethical rehoming practices on social media. Unregulated custody transfer, often referred to as 'rehoming', is the practice of adoptive parents transferring legal custody of their child to another individual or family without the involvement of the child welfare, oversight, or other appropriate systems. Photos and biographies of minor children whose adoptive parents want to rehome them can be found in numerous places on social media, advertising them to potential new parents without concern of who they might be.

After Kirsta's talk, we received the following:

I'm writing to thank you for the excellent webinar your organization put on a few weeks ago. A contact of mine at the U.S. Department of State shared the invitation with me because the Uniform Law Commission (ULC) recently finalized a model law on this topic called the Uniform Unregulated Child Custody Transfer Act (UUCCTA). The UUCCTA provides states with a uniform regulatory framework to deal with two issues: (1) the unregulated custody transfer of children; and (2) provision of better information and guidance to prospective adoptive parents of children in certain adoptions.

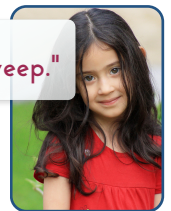
The UUCCTA has already been enacted in Utah and Washington and will likely be enacted in more states in the future. I wanted to write to share some information about this model law with the folks at your organization and any attendees of the Advertising Children on Social Media: Ethical Concerns in Rehoming Practices webinar who may be interested in working to enact this model law in their states.



"Anna is an organized and clean child who keeps her room neat."



"David is stronger than he looks, and loves to do yardwork."



"Cayleigh loves to clean and sweep."

"John's family tells us he loves to help with cooking and baking."



RESILIENCE

Vicki Twomey & Jessica Figlio: *Beyond the Early Years: Growing with our Adoptee Children*



Nearly all adoption education focuses on adopting a baby, but does not address what happens as they baby grows into a teen, and then an adult. We hear a lot about preparing for openness in the early years of the adoptees life. But what does the relationship look as the adoptee grows up? How do we prepare for a healthy open relationship through those years? Join two seasoned birthmothers, **Vicki Twomey** and **Jessica Figlio**, who have each experienced over 20 years of openness in adoption, as they share their stories.



I am so excited that birth moms are finally getting a strong voice. We are so much more than a stereotype or a statistic.

-LF, birthmom

Hope O Baker : *Finding Hope and Light*



Speaker, birthmother, and author of birthmother memoir, *Finding Hope: A Birthmother's Journey into the Light*, **Hope O Baker** talks about building resilience and learning to thrive despite the circumstances life throws you. In conversation with moderator, advice columnist, and birthmother **Liz Pryor**, author of birthmother memoir *Look at You Now: How Keeping a Teenage Secret Changed My Life*, this session gives an unvarnished and nuanced look at adoption from a birthmother perspective, giving adoptive parents, adoptees, and adoption professionals the opportunity to better understand the birthmom experience.



I feel like all of us have our own unique stories of challenge, and pain, and difficulty, and no matter how often we wonder, “why do things happen in my life the way they do,” it’s really important to remember that it’s not so much what happens to us in our lives as how we choose to get through it.

-Liz Pryor, birthmom



Billy Kaplan, LCSW: *Parenting in SPACE™: Therapeutic Parenting in Difficult Times*



TreeHouse Health's President & Clinical Director **Billy Kaplan, LCSW**, discusses therapeutic parenting, through an attachment-focused, trauma-informed lens. Parents raising adopted kids know that this parenting approach, one that fosters feelings of safety and connectedness, is vitally important for traumatized children, and helping adoptive families is a big focus of Billy Kaplan's work. Parenting in SPACE™ is a new framework, developed by the therapists at TreeHouse health's psychotherapists, gives parents a new set of tools for parenting children who have experienced trauma.



Put on your oxygen mask first. Really. Because to help our kids, we have to help ourselves first. Then take care of our primary partner relationship. Then take care of the kids. If the focus is on the kids the kids won't be better won't get better, they won't feel better, because if you're anxious, your anxiety is going to spread to them.

- Billy Kaplan, LCSW

Clemencia Deleon: *Developing Radical Honesty and Emotional Intelligence*



Clemencia Deleon, a birthmother who placed her child in a kinship adoption, unpacks the complexity of kinship adoption, and the importance of honesty and emotional intelligence in navigating this form of adoption. There are a lot of obvious benefits built in to kinship adoption: the adoptee has racial and cultural mirrors, are already part of their adoptive parents' family, and they and one or both of their birthparents are known to them as part of their extended family. But the more difficult aspects of kinship adoption are often glossed over, or ignored entirely. Families are complicated, and full of history, and that history can impact the adoption dynamic in unexpected and difficult ways.



In order for there to be any real, authentic openness, there has to be radical honesty — honesty with yourself and honesty with the child — honesty about who you are, and why you chose adoption.

-Clemencia Deleon





"I would totally recommend this session to anyone considering adoption, especially those with trepidation about what openness looks like. This is the most positive example I have ever seen. "

- MD, social worker



This was the best training we have attended as future adoptive parents. We felt that all sides of the triad were well represented.

- adoptive father



I think every white parenting raising a Black child in America should hear Isaac Etter speak. Nothing prepares you for what racism looks like until you see it through your children's eyes, and Isaac gave me a new set of tools and perspectives I can use to help my kids navigate a landscape that looks very different from my own.

- adoptive mother

For questions please contact Allison Jones,
Director of Outreach and Community Engagement at
allison@onyourfeetmidwest.org

