NEW WORLDS OF ADOPTION CONFERENCE 2015:

LAUNCHING INTO ADULTHOOD

FRIDAY, APRIL 17TH | 8AM-5.30PM

CAMPUS CENTER AUDITORIUM, UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

This program is sponsored by the Massachusetts Psychological Association. Massachusetts Psychological Association is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. Massachusetts Psychological Association maintains responsibility for this program and its content.
8:00  REGISTRATION & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
  CAMPUS CENTER, AUDITORIUM (LEVEL 1)

9:00  WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS
  Katherine Newman, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs,
  University of Massachusetts Amherst

9:15  KEYNOTE
  “Ordinary Magic on the Developmental Road to Resilience”
  Presenter: Ann Masten, University of Minnesota
  How do young people overcome adversity to succeed in life? This presentation will highlight research on resilience in development with a focus on transitions to adulthood and the adaptive systems that protect human development and promote recovery in the aftermath of adverse childhood experiences. Adoption will be discussed in relation to both risk and resilience. Recent advances in resilience science and its applications in practice will be highlighted.

10:15 BREAK

10:30 PANEL DISCUSSION
  “Adopted Adults: Intersecting Personal and Professional Worlds”
  Chair: Ann Masten, University of Minnesota
  Panelists: Astrid Castro (Dabbeni), Judith Eckerle & Quade French.

11:30 LUNCH, ANNOUNCEMENTS & AWARD PRESENTATIONS

12:00 POSTER SESSION, BOOK SALE & NETWORKING

1:15 BREAKOUT SESSION 1 (5 options)

  CAMPUS CENTER, AUDITORIUM (LEVEL 1)
  Does Biological Family Involvement Impact or Destabilize Adoptive Placements from Foster Care? I Presenter: Joyce Maguire Pavao
  This workshop is a discussion of the challenges, stumbling blocks, and strengths that can emerge during young adult years. Adolescence is complicated for everyone and it can be especially complicated for teens/young adults who are adopted. It is important to talk to young adults about adoption to help make sense of their story and their behaviors, to validate their experience as being normal, and to promote joining and reduce feelings of divided loyalty. It is the responsibility of the professionals to learn what is normal under the circumstances of adoption.

  ROOM 162 (LEVEL 1)
  Adoption Disclosure: The Impact of Late Discovery of Adoption on Adult Adoptees
  Presenters: Amanda Baden, Elliotte Harrington, Doug Shadel, Ron Morgan, Lauren Spinella & Nicole Christian
  Finding out as an adult that one was adopted as a child may result in feelings of anger and confusion and issues of trust, identity, and self-worth. The impact of late discovery on adoptees’ well-being and overall adjustment may be traumatic and overwhelming. This study provides the first descriptive data on how individuals who were not told about their status as adoptees until they were adults have coped with this information. The results of this study highlight several issues related to counseling and psychotherapy that are important to improving practice and treatment.
Are You Still My Family?: Policy and Practice Around Post-Adoption Sibling Visitation

Presenters: Dawn Post & Sarah McCarthy

In most states, sibling relationships fall into a legal gray area in which they are not actually terminated, but not granted any protection. Children in both open and closed adoptions are therefore often left to negotiate sibling visits with their adoptive parent without any court involvement or representation. Presenters will discuss how the current practice of ignoring sibling ties is psychologically harmful to children and counterproductive to the goal of providing children with stable, permanent adoptive homes. They will examine how an attorney for the child can advocate for an adopted client’s sibling visitation rights, and how a change in current policies will benefit both children and adoptive families.

Emerging Adulthood in Open Adoption

Presenter: Deborah Siegel

This presentation describes a study examining emerging adults who were raised in open adoptions. Findings depict these adoptees’ experiences with and feelings about their open adoptions, their ways of managing their complex extended family networks, successes and challenges in forming identity, sustaining intimate relationships, completing their educations, finding employment, and achieving autonomy. It appears that emerging adults from open adoption tackle some of the same adoption issues as those raised in confidential adoption. The presentation explores these issues within the context of the socioeconomic and political circumstances shaping today’s emerging adults, and presents guidelines for policy and practice in adoption.

Predictors of Adoptive Family Relationships During Emerging Adulthood

Presenters: Amy Walkner & Martha Rueter

While research on adoptive families during childhood and adolescence has grown, little is known about adoptive families during emerging adulthood. There is evidence to suggest lower relationship quality in adoptive families compared to nonadoptive families, but what accounts for these differences is unknown. The importance of parent-child relationships in emerging adulthood cannot be overstated, as emerging adults with positive relationships with parents have been found to benefit from a host of positive social and psychological outcomes. This presentation will highlight research investigating the impact of adoption-related variables on adoptees’ self-reported and observed relationships with adoptive mothers during emerging adulthood.

African American Adopted Children Launching Into Adulthood: Experiences in a Rural Faith-Based Community Setting

Presenters: Ruth McRoy & Kathleen Belanger

Since 1996, families and friends of Bennett Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Possum Trot, TX have adopted more than 77 African American children from child welfare. This workshop presents the latest findings from a longitudinal follow up study of Bennett Chapel families and youth, which was conducted in late 2014. The findings suggest that practices such as focusing on the child, engaging communities in ways that are sensitive to their needs, sharing responsibility, culturally competent service delivery and supports and services, can result in positive outcomes for these children as they launch into adulthood in rural communities.

2:15 BREAK/ WALK TO NEXT SESSION

View the PRESENTERS’ BIOS AT: umass.edu/adoptionsconference
1. CAMPUS CENTER, AUDITORIUM (LEVEL 1)

Emerging Adult Adopted Persons and Their Families: Counseling a Diverse and Underserved Group | Presenters: Susan Branco Alvarado & Joy Lieberthal Rho

The vast majority of research seems to be focused on early childhood of adoptees rather than long-term effects of transracial adoptions on family systems. Because there is little information available that addresses emergent adulthood for this population, we examined developmental milestones from both late adolescence and early young adulthood. The co-presenters are both adopted persons and licensed clinicians with a combined 25 years of practice collaborating with adopted persons and families. They will discuss their clinical experiences with this population and will describe the efficacy of incorporating the clinician’s transracial adoption identity into the counseling relationship.

2. ROOM 162 (LEVEL 1)

Genetic Testing: What are the Risks, Potential Gains, and Continued Unknowns in the Context of Medical Decision Making for Adult Adoptees?

Presenters: Thomas May and Samantha Wilson

Genome Sequencing (GS) offers the possibility of “filling the gap” of dispositional genetic information that would normally be available to individuals through observation and biological family history. Though there may be some potential advantages to the use of GS in this context for adult adoptees, the potential for risk remains and some risks may be unique within the adoption community. This presentation will provide attendees a chance to hear about emerging projects within the Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities at the Medical College of Wisconsin that explore the use of GS within the adoption community.

3. ROOM 165 (LEVEL 1)


Children who are in foster care or who were adopted internationally/domestically typically thrive in their adoptive homes but can come to a professional’s attention because of learning or behavior challenges. While there are wonderful resources available to families through social workers, psychologists, therapists or neuropsychologists, we suggest a team approach that also includes a medically based evaluation. This presentation will highlight some case studies and ways that we approach children from multiple angles in order to optimize their potential.

4. ROOM 908 (LEVEL 9)

The Role of Siblings in Adoptive Family Dynamics -- Adoption Communication, Adoptive Identity, and Developmental Outcomes | Presenter: Rachel Farr

Siblings are important in shaping individual experiences across development. In adoptive families, siblings may uniquely influence adoptees’ perceptions of adoption. I will present results about sibling relationships in adolescence and emerging adulthood from the Minnesota-Texas Adoption Research Project (Grotevant & McRoy, 1998). Adoptees showed better adjustment when siblings were involved (versus not involved) in birth family connections. Also, when adopted siblings felt positively about adoption, so did adoptees. Implications will be discussed as related to enduring contributions of adoptive sibling relationships and connections with policy and practice. There will be interactive audience dialogue with a panel of adoptees and siblings.

5. ROOM 917 (LEVEL 9)

Navigating Access to Higher Education | Presenters: Chris Langelier & Katy Andres

Katy Andres, a senior at Hampshire College, has spent this past year working on her Division 3 research paper focused on how youth in the public foster care system gain access to higher education. For this presentation, Katy will talk about central themes she found during her studies. Participants will be asked questions about their college experience and how they got to college through foster care and how being in foster care affects their college experience. For this workshop Katy will present the research that she has done and engage a panel of youth experts in a conversation about their journey to access to higher education.
3:30  BREAK/ WALK TO NEXT SESSION

3:45  BREAKOUT SESSION 3 (5 options)

1.  CAMPUS CENTER, AUDITORIUM (LEVEL 1)
    Transitioning from Adolescence to Young Adulthood: Experiences with Racial and Adoption Microaggressions
    Presenters: Amanda Baden, Ellen Pinderhughes, Lauren Spinella & Andrew Kitchen
    This presentation will build upon a new framework for conceptualizing the oppression experienced by the adoption kinship network. The framework utilizes the construct of racial microaggressions and extends the application of microaggressions to the experience of adoption. Drawing upon findings from two qualitative studies, one with adoptive parents of Chinese children and one with adult adoptees, we will present examples of anticipated microaggressions as reported by adoptive parents as well as retrospective accounts of microaggressions reported by adult adoptees. Presenters will offer a practice module for preparing for and addressing these microaggressions with case studies and best practices.

2.  ROOM 162 (LEVEL 1)
    Speak Out Team Development and Youth Advocacy | Presenter: Kim Stevens
    In this workshop, participants will learn how to develop, promote, and support adopted and foster youth public speaking teams. In addition to giving young people skills to advocate for themselves and others, these teams are highly effective in creating a supportive community for youth, raising public awareness, guiding practice improvements, and promoting system change. NACAC’s Community Champions Network has launched a number of youth speak out teams over the past several years—could yours be next?

3.  ROOM 165 (LEVEL 1)
    Breaking Bread with the ENTIRE Adoption Constellation | Presenter: Astrid Castro (Dabbeni)
    In this workshop, participants learn what the term adoption constellation really means. We will have opportunities to discuss the hurdles and challenges of creating community that is inclusive of all perspectives of an adoption journey. For some, this workshop will challenge your thoughts and ideas of what it REALLY means to break bread with the adoption constellation and for others it will be validating the path they are already on AND for ALL it will provide tools on how to invite other members of the adoption constellation to their table.

4.  ROOM 908 (LEVEL 9)
    Are we Adequately Preparing Adoption Professionals to Work with Young Adult Adoptees?
    Presenters: Bibiana Koh, Ruth McRoy & JaeRan Kim
    This interactive presentation will highlight research examining undergraduate and graduate level adoption-specific curricula content. Presenters will engage the audience in a discussion of (a) salient adoption issues practitioners encounter with young adult adoptees and their families, (b) evidence-based and/or research-informed practices useful for adoption practitioners and, (d) what kinds of adoption competency training modules are available to prepare clinicians for work with this young adult population?

5.  ROOM 917 (LEVEL 9)
    The Adoption Mentoring Partnership: Mentors Speak Out about Getting to College and What They’ve Learned as Mentors | Moderator: Karin Garber. Panelists: Michael Abbate, Samantha Calabrese, Tim Dillon & Elena Faltas.
    In this session participants will learn how mentors in the Adoption Mentoring Partnership program navigated their way successfully through high school and to college. They will discuss challenges they experienced in high school and key ingredients that helped them successfully launch into college. The mentors will also discuss what being a mentor in the AMP program has meant to them particularly as it relates to their identity.

4:45  PERFORMANCE BY THE UMASS A CAPELLA GROUP (The Dynamics), POSTERS & BOOK SALE
    CAMPUS CENTER, AUDITORIUM (LEVEL1)

5:30  END
1. Chinese Transracial Adoptees’ Experiences with Discrimination
   Anna Nicole Dartley (Mount Holyoke College) and Patricia G. Ramsey

2. Length of Time During the Adoption Process for Lesbian And Gay Compared To Heterosexual Parents
   Krystal K. Cashen (UMass Amherst) and Harold D. Grotevant

3. “Add as Friend?”: Adoptive Parents Expectations and Feelings Concerning their Children’s Contact with Birth Family via Technology
   Kaitlin Black (Clark University) April Moyer and Abbie Goldberg

4. Advocates for Families First: A Collaborative Approach to Improved Permanency Outcomes
   Kim Stevens (Advocates for Families First)

5. Birth Family Contact Among Sexually Diverse Adoptive Families: Types of Contact and Perceptions of Open Adoptions
   Yelena Ravvina (UMass Amherst) and Rachel H. Farr

   Amanda L. Baden, (Montclair State University) Elliotte Harrington, Ebony White, Lauren Sullivan, Andrew Kitchen, Jonathan Mazza, and Nicole Christian

7. A Decade in the Making: Patterns of African American Family Public Adoptions
   Charlene Chester (Morgan State University)

8. Putative Fatherhood and Adoption Security
   Kathleen M. Nielsen, MSW (Boston College)

9. Family Context and Searching Among Internationally Adopted Adolescents
   Jessica A.K. Matthews (Tufts University) Laurie C. Miller and Ellen E. Pinderhughes

10. Beyond Foster Care: Exploring Continued Child Needs and Advocacy Priorities

11. Black and White: Single Female Adoptions of African American Children
    Tahja Reid (Morgan State University) Charlene E. Chester, Adrienne Washington and Tysheara Willis

12. Understanding the State of Adoption Research through Scholarly Network Analysis
    Catherine Hamilton (University of Florida) Raffaele Vacca and Jeanne-Marie Stacciari

13. Instilling Racial Pride: Transracial Adoptive Parents Navigating their Children’s Racial Groups
    Max Tulinski (Clark University) Kaitlin Black and Abbie Goldberg

14. Narrating Reunions with Birth Families in Interviews of Adult International Adoptees
    Maarit Koskinen (University of Jyvaskyla, Finland)

15. “I want to be there when he graduates:” Foster Parents Show Higher Levels of Commitment than Group Care Providers
    Albert Lo (University of Delaware) Caroline K.P. Roben, Collin Maier, Kimberly Fabian, Carole Shaufler, Mary Dozier
Jeanne Howard, MSW, Ph.D., began her academic career almost 40 years ago and has been conducting research on adoption issues for most of that time, much of it through a rich partnership with her friend and colleague Susan Smith. A Professor Emerita of the School of Social Work at Illinois State University, she also served as Research Director of the Donaldson Adoption Institute and for 15 years co-directed the Center for Adoption Studies at Illinois State University. During her career, she garnered approximately $4 million in external funding for research and center administration. In addition to the Adoption 2002 Excellence Award and 2006 Angel in Adoption Award which she received with colleague Susan Smith, she was honored in 2013 with the Chairman's Award from the African American Advisory Council of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. She has co-authored and authored several books, monographs and articles on adoption. Her work has focused primarily on children and youth adopted from foster care and the post adoption needs and services for such families. Her work has also examined youth aging out of foster care, access to original birth certificates as an ethical issue, over-representation of children of color in foster care and adoption by gay and lesbian parents. She has strong interests in the application of research findings to policy, recently serving as a consultant on DeBoer v. Snyder, a case which began as a same sex adoption case and became a same sex marriage case. This case will be heard by the Supreme Court in April 2015 and may well lead to the end of marriage and adoption discrimination against same sex couples throughout the country.

Susan Livingston Smith, MSSW, ACSW, LCSW, has been a leading researcher in the field of post-adoption services for the past 20 years. She is a Professor Emerita of the School of Social Work at Illinois State University, where she co-directed the Center for Adoption Studies. She worked as Program Director of the Donaldson Adoption Institute for 10 years, and is currently a national adoption consultant, working on two federally funded grant projects. Smith and her research partner, Jeanne Howard, were given the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Adoption 2002 Excellence Award for applied scholarship and research. Susan has co-authored four books on adoption: Promoting Successful Adoptions: Practice with Troubled Families (1999); After Adoption: The Needs of Adopted Youth (2003); Siblings in Adoption and Foster Care (2008), and Facilitating Adoptions from Care (2014), as well as over 15 journal articles, several book chapters, and numerous scholarly monographs. Throughout her career, she has successfully translated research on adoption and foster care so that it can be used by social workers, psychologists, and other professionals in their work with adopted children, adoptive parents, and birth parents. While at the Donaldson Adoption Institute, she was involved with the preparation of 11 widely-publicized studies and policy papers that have increased public understanding about adoption and foster care.
A gift from Andrew and Virginia Rudd, combined with matching funds, established the Rudd Family Foundation Endowed Chair. The Rudds’ gift reflects their personal commitment to stimulate the development of new knowledge about adoption in order to benefit adoption practice (placements, education, post-adoption services, clinical work) and policy (at agency, state, federal, and international levels).

The Rudd Adoption Research Program is one of the key activities of the Rudd Chair. The program is located within the University of Massachusetts Amherst Psychology Department and is affiliated with the multidisciplinary Center for Research on Families.

The program has four goals:

- to advance knowledge about the psychology of adoption
- to provide evidence-based knowledge to inform adoption policy and practice
- to build capacity for excellence in adoption research
- to promote adoption research initiatives of emerging scholars

In short, the program seeks to develop synergy among scientists, practitioners, and policymakers from varied disciplines who share interests in the many topics relevant to adoption. The ultimate goal of these activities is to contribute to evidence-based practice in adoption and to provide research-based information that will influence policy at agency, state, federal, and international levels.

The program is directed by Harold D. Grotevant, Ph.D., who holds the Rudd Family Foundation Chair in Psychology at UMass Amherst. He is Principal Investigator on the Minnesota / Texas Adoption Research Project (MTARP), a 25-year longitudinal research study that focuses on the consequences of variations in openness in adoption arrangements for all members of the adoptive kinship network: birthmothers, adoptive parents, and adopted children, and for the relationships within these family systems. His work has resulted in over 100 articles published in professional journals as well as several books, including Openness in Adoption: Exploring Family Connections (with Ruth McRoy, Sage Publications, 1998). He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, Association for Psychological Science, and the National Council on Family Relations; Senior Research Fellow of the Donaldson Adoption Institute; Board Member of the North American Council on Adoptable Children; and recipient of research, teaching, and leadership awards.