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## **Domestic Infant Adoption: Family Communication about Adoption and Adopted Child Curiosity**

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Authors	Wrobel, Gretchen Miller
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# Domestic Infant Adoption: Family Communication about Adoption and Adopted Child Curiosity

Gretchen Miller Wrobel, Ph.D.  
Bethel University  
St. Paul, Minnesota

# Definition of Openness

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- A continuum of contact and communication between members of the adopted child's birth and adoptive families.

(Grotevant & McRoy, 1998)

- Confidential
- Mediated
- Fully Disclosed

# Openness as a dynamic process

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- Intensity of desire for contact by any member of the adoption kinship network (adoptive parents, adopted children, birth parents)
- Adoptive and birth family dynamics
- Current level of openness
- Emotional Distance Regulation

# Adoption Related Family Communication

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- David Kirk's classic theory
  - Acknowledgment of Difference
  - Rejection of Difference
- Adoption Communicative Openness
  - Brodzinsky
  - Grotevant and Neil

# Adoption Communicative Openness

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- Communication with the child about adoption
- Promotion of the child's dual connection to two families
- Empathy with and tolerance of the child's feelings about adoption
- Communication with the birth family
- Empathy for birth relatives

# Adoption Related Communication and Child Curiosity

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- Possible Responses
  - Share all available information
  - Share all available information while seeking more
  - Share some information and withhold other information
  - Withhold all available information

# What are adopted children placed as infants curious about at adolescence?

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- 1. Reasons for placement
- 2. Other children being parented
- 3. Appearance
- 4. How the birth parent “was doing”
- 5. Personality characteristics



# Information Seeking

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- The gathering of information previously unknown the adopted person about his or her adoption and birth family.

(Wrobel & Dillon, 2009)

# Thoughts for Practitioners and Families

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- Curiosity is a normative experience and changes over time.
- Communication about adoption should remain open and flexible.

# Thoughts for Practitioners and Families

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- Deciding yes or not to information seeking is a normative process yet not all adopted persons seek out additional information.
- When contact exists between birth and adoptive families, there should be flexibility in the amount and type of information shared