

Communication Webinar Discussion Questions

Please use the following questions and vignettes to help synthesize the topics presented in the “What Adoptees Wish Their Parents Knew About Being Adopted” webinar.

1. Were there difficult topics to talk about with your parents? If so, how did you manage those situations? How could your parents have better supported you?

Vignette #1: Kathy recalled having “the talk” about the birds and the bees when she was about 12 years old. Her family had never talked about reproduction and she was really confused about all this new information she was hearing. She couldn’t really make sense of it all and put it together into a coherent understanding. When she asked her mother questions, her mother would get that knowing smile and seemed to act different. Her answers were rather hesitant and Kathy was left with a feeling that her mother was uncomfortable talking about reproduction. That knowing smile was really disturbing to Kathy, and she felt embarrassed about it. **How would you handle the situation differently?**

2. What are three ways “popular” adoption language may be used by your extended family or friends? If a comment offended you, how might you respond — Informational? Humorous? Privacy Guarding? (Keep in mind that your response may be different depending upon the person and the situation.)

Vignette #2: You and your family walk into the local department store and notice that some of the employees do a double-take when they notice the makeup of your family. You’re used to these types of glances, as you’re aware that mixed-race families often attract attention. As your family ages and your kids become teenagers, you notice that besides just glances, employees keep you and your children within eyeshot. **How do you address this with your children? How do you address it with the store employees?**

3. It's important to begin integrating "avoided" language into your home. What are three phrases you could use around the house to signal to your child that adoption is okay to talk about?

Vignette #3: Your child comes home from school and seems a bit sad. When asked how her day went, she said it was okay. You notice that her response doesn't match the look on her face. **How do you respond? What can you say or do to help her feel safe to talk about what is bothering her?**

4. Name three behaviors your children exhibit when they are uncomfortable with a conversation. Being able to recognize these behaviors will allow you to sense how they're feeling about conversations around adoption. For example: "You're kind of acting (squirming, giggling, no eye contact, etc), like talking about this is uncomfortable? I'm uncomfortable too..."