

# support group news



If you are interested in adoption, getting ready for placement or you are an experienced adoptive parent please join us at one or more of our support groups. We offer peer to peer education, information and support.

These groups are for anyone on the adoption journey. They are informal and confidential. New-comers are welcome.

**Please let us know if you plan to attend so that in the event of a group meeting having to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances we can notify you.**

## Antrim

**When:** Thursday 22 March 7.30-9.30pm  
**Where:** Holiday Inn, Antrim BT41 4LL  
**Contact:** Barbara [irvinebarbara212@gmail.com](mailto:irvinebarbara212@gmail.com) or call 028 9077 5211

**Exploring Attachment Styles through Art Therapy** Tina Enlander is a creative art therapist with Tessa. She will be offering a workshop to give us an insight into how this therapy works. The focus of the workshop will be exploring attachment styles through art making. Tina plans to offer us a little theory and some practical experiences. She is an experienced therapist who has also run workshops for guardians and residential staff. We hope you will join us for this unique opportunity to see how a Tessa arts therapist can work with us and our children. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

## Belfast

**When:** Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April 7.15-9.30pm  
**Where:** Agape Centre, 238 Lisburn Road BELFAST BT9 6GF  
**Contact:** [anne@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:anne@adoptionuk.org.uk) or call 028 9077 5211

**Depression, Self Harm & the Mental Health of Young People** This session will include a representative from 'Aware', the mental health support charity, providing information and advice about their services, plus Dr. Mary Short (Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist). Dr Short will discuss the presentation of significant disturbances such as self harm and depression in the adolescent, and how these may be related to adverse early life experiences, particularly trauma. She will talk about the potential impact of these disturbances on the parents as well as the wider family, and think about what might be useful ways of responding to these disturbances, which would help both the young person and the parents to cope better. She will illustrate some of her talk with anonymized case histories. There will be time for question & answers plus group discussion - (questions can be submitted anonymously). Please let us know if you plan to attend.

## Coleraine

**When:** Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> April 7.30-9.30pm  
**Where:** Sandel Centre, 6 Knocklynn Road, Coleraine BT5  
**Contact:** E.B. [ebmullan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ebmullan@yahoo.co.uk) or call 028 9077 5211

**Emotion Coaching** Regulating Emotions! How can we help our children manage the intensity of their emotions and their feelings like sadness, anger, helplessness, fear and anxiety? The expression of strong emotions can lead to inappropriate and challenging behaviours like aggression, defiance or constant crying. In turn this can result in strong responses from parents that can also be difficult to manage. Tonight we will use a presentation designed by one of our members who is a counsellor and is trained in 'Gottman Emotion Coaching' to explore this challenging subject. Emotion coaching is something we can do to support our children but it also recognises the importance of the parent's own emotional state. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

## Dungannon

**When:** Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 7.15-9.15pm  
**Where:** Ranfurly House, 26 Market Sq. Dungannon BT70 1AB  
**Contact:** Anne [anne@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:anne@adoptionuk.org.uk) or call 028 9077 5211

**Life Story** Life story is an ongoing project for any adoptive parent and child. When and how should you start? How much can your child understand? How can you present difficult information? What approach would work best for your child? There can be a lot of questions. A social worker from Southern Trust will offer information and ideas and talk about the principles of life story. There will be time for questions. If you feel able to share your own examples which might help other parents do bring them along. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

## D/LDerry

**When:** Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 7-9pm  
**Where:** Holywell Trust, 10-14 Bishop Street D/LDerry BT48 6PW  
**Contact:** [marie.mckeownauk@gmail.com](mailto:marie.mckeownauk@gmail.com) or [anne@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:anne@adoptionuk.org.uk)  
or call 028 9077 5211

**Emotion Coaching** Regulating Emotions! How can we help our children manage the intensity of their emotions and their feelings like sadness, anger, helplessness, fear and anxiety? The expression of strong emotions can lead to inappropriate and challenging behaviours like aggression, defiance or constant crying. In turn this can result in strong responses from parents that can also be difficult to manage. Tonight we will use a presentation designed by one of our members who is a counsellor and is trained in 'Gottman Emotion Coaching' to explore this challenging subject. Emotion coaching is something we can do to support our children but it also recognises the importance of the parent's own emotional state. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

## South Down

**When:** Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 7.30-9.30pm  
**Where:** Hillsborough Village Centre, 7 Ballynahinch Road, BT26 6AR  
**Contact:** Judith [jdinton3@yahoo.com](mailto:jdinton3@yahoo.com) or call 02890 775211

### Promoting Achievement at School

What paths are open to us as parents to engage both school and child to promote achievement? School can often be one of the biggest hurdles we face with our children. Getting their additional needs identified and getting the school to recognise them can seem like an endless challenge. Often the ideas, strategies and tips that the school provide do not work for the child with attachment difficulties. A special needs support teacher with knowledge of attachment will be coming along to help us explore how we can support our children's educational needs at home and at school. We will also look at some barriers to learning like dyslexia and the acquisition of Literacy skills. There will be time for questions. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

## Newry & Antrim

**When:** Monthly  
**Contact:** Elizabeth [elizabethlyttle@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:elizabethlyttle@adoptionuk.org.uk)

**Support for those parenting extremely challenging children.** Elizabeth Lyttle facilitates two monthly groups (Antrim & Newry) offering peer support to parents who are struggling with their children's behaviours. Contact Elizabeth for further details.

## North Down

**When:** Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 7.30-9.30pm  
**Where:** Tesco (Community Room) Knocknagoney Road, Belfast, BT4 2PW  
**Contact:** Wesley [wzzrsgraham@netscape.net](mailto:wzzrsgraham@netscape.net) or call 028 9077 5211

**Skill up your Support Network.... for family and friends** We rely hugely on our family and friends for support in adoption, but often they have little or no understanding of the impact of trauma on our children's behaviour, learning and ability to form trusting relationships. This evening aims to provide family and friends with an insight into what might be driving adopted children's behaviour and their parents' stress. Hopefully with greater understanding of a child's history comes better understanding for them and their parents. Please encourage family and friends who are or who will be part of your support network to come along. This session will be led by TESSA staff. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

## Omagh & Enniskillen

**When:** Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> March 7.30-9.30pm  
**Where:** Omagh Fire Station, Killybrack Road BT79 7DG  
**Contact:** Mandy [mandy.mcq@gmail.com](mailto:mandy.mcq@gmail.com) or call 028 9077 5211

**Adopter and Adoptee** Our speaker for this event found out she was adopted in her teens. She will talk about the shock and the pain of this discovery and how she has come to terms with it. Our speaker then went on to become an adoptive parent of siblings herself. She now wrestles with the issues of contact in an open adoption as well as the demands of adoptive family life. Two adoption histories, two stories, two approaches; what can we learn? We invite you join us for a peer to peer support evening with a **focus on 'Contact'**. Please let us know if you plan to attend.

## Concurrent Care Belfast

**When:** Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2.30-4.30pm  
**Where:** Tesco (Community Room) Knocknagoney Road, Belfast, BT4 2PW  
**Contact:** Joanne & Davy Davidson, Ruth & Phil Clarke [hetherington\\_ruth@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:hetherington_ruth@yahoo.co.uk)

**Play with Them!** Keely Moseley, a Play Therapist and concurrent carer will be helping us explore and understand the role that play and play therapy can have in supporting our children's development. She will offer ideas about how to incorporate therapeutic play, from the earliest stages in a child's development or placement. She will give insight into the developmental play model, helping us to be aware of what to expect from our children and at what stage. Keely will also consider indicators to your child's need for professional intervention and will signpost people to this. There will be time for our usual informal chat where we can seek support from others in similar situations. This group is specifically for concurrent carers with a child in placement, those who are approved and waiting for a concurrent placement or those who are considering this option and want to know more. Where a baby is placed, carers are welcome to bring the child too.

## Concurrent Care Omagh

**When:** Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2.30-4.30pm  
**Where:** Omagh Fire Station, Killybrack Road BT79 7DG  
**Contact:** Karyn [karyn.birney@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:karyn.birney@hotmail.co.uk) or call 028 9077 5211

: If you're a concurrent carer or thinking about this route to adoption, please come along and meet other carers/adopters going through the process. This group will provide an opportunity to share knowledge and for peer support for families at every stage of the concurrent care process. This group will be led by Karyn and Brian Birney who are concurrent carers themselves. Carers/parents are welcome to bring younger, preschool aged children with them but the group is not suitable for older children. Some play mats and toys will be provided for young children and refreshments will also be on offer. Please contact Karyn and Brian or the office if you plan to attend.

## LGBT

**When:** Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 7-9pm  
**Where:** 'The Honest Vegan' 336 Lisburn Rd, Belfast, BT9 6GH  
**Contact:** Sara [tibssara@hotmail.com](mailto:tibssara@hotmail.com) or call 028 9077 5211

**The Guardian Ad Litem's** job is to ensure that the best interest of the child is represented when a child can't speak for themselves. A Guardian or GAL is always appointed to a child in the fostering and adoption process. We have invited a guardian to speak at our next meeting where she will consider how the courts and legal processes work. She will also cover the different stages in freeing and take questions about this from members. Please join us for this meeting where you can avail of very specialist information in a relaxed and informal setting. This meeting is open to anyone from the LGBT community. It will be of particular interest to those considering or starting out in the adoption or fostering to adopt process.

## Single Adopters

**When:** Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> March 7.30-9.30pm  
**Where:** Malone Lodge Hotel, 60 Eglantine Avenue, Malone Road Belfast BT9 6DY  
**Contact:** [anne@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:anne@adoptionuk.org.uk) or call 028 9077 5211

**Single parent adopters** are growing in numbers but there still aren't that many! It's good to meet and offer support to each other. If you are considering adopting by yourself, you are in the process or you are an experienced adopter, please join us for an informal get together. We will meet for a chat and to arrange other events. Please let us know if you plan to attend. If you are attending please ask for Anne at reception if you can't spot us. Refreshments will be provided. Car parking is at the rear of the building.

## Teens & Parents

**When:** Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2.30-6.30pm  
**Where:** Central Belfast - Venue TBC  
**Contact:** [elizabethlytle@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:elizabethlytle@adoptionuk.org.uk) or call 028 9077 5211

**Make your own Pizza Cookery Session.** Ever wanted to try your skills out or even learn a bit about cookery? Well now is your chance. We will have a trained chef coming to take us through the steps of real pizza making. I mean starting from scratch and actually making the dough and throwing it into a pizza shape! There will also be a real outside pizza oven involved so after we have added the tomato paste, healthy toppings and some cheese, we can all have a great pizza feast. Please let Elizabeth know if you plan to attend and she will be in touch with details. This group is open to young people from secondary school age and their parents. We are always pleased to have new families join us.

**Volunteer Support Group co-ordinators and helpers are always needed in NI but in particular for Dungannon, D/LDerry & the Single Adopters' Groups.**  
If you are interested in finding out more please contact Anne  
[anne@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:anne@adoptionuk.org.uk) or call the office on 028 9077 5211