

## MN ADOPT HELP Program

Toll-Free: 855.670.4357 or 612.746.5137

[HELP-program@mnadopt.org](mailto:HELP-program@mnadopt.org)

The **HELP Program** provides easily accessible, reliable and knowledgeable post-placement support and guidance to the Minnesota adoption, foster and kinship community. This program is FREE to any Minnesota family, professional or person who is connected to the foster, adoption and kinship communities. Support is phone and email based and can be accessed multiple times as needs often change for families.

**HELP Specialists** have extensive understanding of grief/trauma/attachment and are well versed in parenting interventions, school concerns, identity, race & ethnicity and systems of care navigation. Examples of specific reasons parents, caregivers, professionals, individuals and community members contact the HELP Program are outlined here. Each interaction is tailored to the needs of the particular caller and can encompass other items than the ones listed.

## Parents and/or Caregivers

### Parents and/or Caregivers often seek support around:

- Finding therapeutic supports that meet the unique needs of families formed by adoption, foster and kinship relationships. These are unique for each caller.
- Additional support and education around the core issues that are experienced by children/adolescents and families after placement. These issues can include grief and loss, identity concerns, behaviors that are connected to early developmental trauma, school concerns, peer relationships, attachment, outward expressions of trauma, self-harm, suicidal concerns and interactions with the judicial system.
- Gaining support/education/resources around transracial adoption, including discussions related to race/adoption, connecting families to ways to build cultural connections for their child/adolescent and family and education on the potential impact of transracial placement on their child(ren)/adolescents throughout the lifespan
- Seeking support on how to recognize and talk to child/teen on a variety of topics related to post placement taking into account different stages/ages
- Acquiring assistance in navigating open adoption relationships and biological family connections
- Parent and/or Caregiver-focused support (therapeutic, peer connections and community services/systems navigation)

- The need for a safe space to process their current situation
- Dynamics within the extended family and new family relationships
- Processing challenges with new family structure, boundaries and possible power shifts within the family unit
- Grief and loss specific to foster parents where children are leaving their care (e.g. reuniting with biological family or entering adoptive family)
- Seeking support and guidance on how to be a connection and bridge for a child(ren)/adolescents when leaving their care (i.e., reuniting with birth family or entering adoptive family)
- Support on how to shift from foster provider to adoptive parent role

## Adopted Persons/Persons who have been in Foster and/or Kinship Care

- Seeking support with search and reunion with biological family
- Gaining information on therapeutic supports and connection to community supports.
- Working through issues with identity, grief and loss, relationship challenges, etc.
- Seeking connection with others with similar experience

## Birth/First Parent and/or Family Members:

- Seeking support on grief and loss throughout various life stages
- Seeking support on open adoption relationships throughout various life stages
- Seeking connection with other birth/first parents/families

## Community Professionals:

Community professionals also can access the MN ADOPT HELP Program. Professionals who contact the program include adoption/foster care social workers, mental health professionals, educators, school social workers and other service providers. Examples of ways the HELP Program can assist professionals who are connected to adoptive, foster and kinship families are:

- Case consultation on how to best support families around attachment and trauma
- Psychoeducation around impact of post placement concerns
- Guidance to therapeutic resources and systems navigation to better assist the families with whom they work.