

OPEN ADOPTION BETRAYAL

To Be Co-Presented by Dr. Gail Hanssen Perry on October 18, 2014 10:00 - 12:00, Safety Harbor, FL.

NOTE: IF YOU ARE A BIRTHPARENT IN A BETRAYED OPEN ADOPTION, OR KNOW ONE WHO IS, THIS HANDOUT IS ESPECIALLY FOR YOU. YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION TO THE QUESTIONS ON PAGE TWO WILL HELP COMPARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH DR. PERRY'S EARLIER RESEARCH FINDINGS (SEE PAGE ONE). YOUR EXPERIENCE IN A BETRAYED OPEN ADOPTION CAN INFORM THE PRESENTATION AT THE CUB RETREAT. YOUR EXPERIENCE MAY ALSO HELP OTHERS WHO CONSIDER OPEN ADOPTION IN THE FUTURE. (TO PERSONALLY PARTICIPATE IN THE CUB RETREAT, GO TO www.cubirthparents.org)



About Co-Presenter Gail Hanssen Perry, “Betrayed Open Adoptions,” CUB Retreat, Safety Harbor, FL, October 18, 2014.

Gail earned her Ph.D. in social policy from the Heller School at Brandeis University. Her doctoral dissertation, “Extending Families: How Adoptive Parents Transition to Openness”, included extensive interviews with thirty adoptive families from Michigan and Massachusetts who were experiencing a range of adoptions, from fully open to traditional, closed adoptions.

As a birthmother herself, Dr. Perry was a founding member of CUB and served as its National Secretary from 1976 - 1984. Afterward, she worked for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. During her 30-year tenure at the MA Dept. of Early Education and Care, she drafted regulations and policies for adoption — along with other programs. Recently retired, Dr. Perry is enjoying gardening and spending time with her children (including her reunited daughter) and her grandchildren.

Findings from Dr. Perry’s research, “Extending Families: How Adoptive Parents Transition to Openness”

As compared to the parents with traditional adoptions, open adoptive parents:

- = grew up in “busier” households (frequent visitors, overnight guests, sleep overs with friends);
- = were more likely to report important adult influences on their development other than their parents;
- = were less likely to have had “confidantes” than were traditional adoptive parents;
- = described themselves as more curious than traditional adoptive parents;
- = were greater risk-takers (owning their own businesses, parasailing, hiking and camping alone in remote woods, extended sailing trips with an infant);
- = were more likely to receive counseling to deal with their infertility;
- = were more likely to talk to friends about their infertility;
- = were more likely to speak with other adoptive parents before placement;

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Questions for Birthparents in Betrayed Open Adoptions

If you are a birthparent in a betrayed open adoption, please answer these questions and attach to an email to cub.curator@gmail.com. Answers are needed as soon as possible. If you need more room to reply than provided here, feel free to attach additional page(s).

1. Was your adoption handled by a multi-service agency, by an "adoption only" agency, or by a lawyer or other facilitator?
2. Did the adoptive parents participate in an orientation/pre-adoption education program? How much time was involved, and over how long a period?
3. Was the adoptive parent education program a group process that was supported by a team of professionals?
4. Did these adoptive parents have an opportunity before placement to meet "been there" birthparents* and hear them describe their motivations and their experiences? (*other than the parents of the child they hoped to adopt)
5. Did these adoptive parents get to know the mother of the child they hoped to adopt/adopted before they reneged on their commitment?
6. Did the adoptive parents give any reason for breaking their commitment? If so, what?