

Introduction on Student Attitudes about Adoption
12 minutes

Ground Rules

Before class, write ground rules on newsprint pad and post in classroom.

The ground rules include the following:

- No “put downs”; respect others’ viewpoints.
- Talk one at a time.
- Do not share personal stories outside of the classroom.
- All ideas and thoughts are valuable

Note to teacher: write down on newsprint the answers to these questions so they can refer back to the answers during the two modules

Module I – Adoption is an Option: Facts about Adoption

Introduction

What do you think when you see or hear the word adoption?

(Teacher allows time for students to respond and then writes down student responses on the board. Once feedback is completed, teacher will inform the students that all of these items will be addressed during this adoption lesson).

What do you know about adoption?

(Teacher allows time for students to respond and then writes down student responses on the board. Once feedback is completed teacher, will inform the students that these items will be addressed during this adoption lesson. Teacher also points out specific myths that may be mentioned at this time).

If a teenager becomes involved in a pregnancy, the teen must make a difficult decision between three different options:

What are the three different options? *(allow the class to respond)*

The options are

- (1) to become a parent and raise the child,**
- (2) to terminate the pregnancy with an abortion, or**
- (3) to make an adoption plan.**

Each one of these options presents challenges and is not easy no matter what the choice. The decision is a very personal one based on individual and family values and beliefs. Each individual must decide what is best for him/herself at that time.

If you became pregnant, or got someone pregnant, would you consider adoption? Why or why not?

(Teacher allows time for students to respond and then writes down student responses on the board. Once feedback is completed teacher will inform the students that these items will be addressed during this adoption lesson).

Background and Objectives

3 minutes

(Note to Teacher: the goal is for teens to “consider” adoption; the goal is not to get teens to choose adoption. The teacher must not impose his/her personal bias about the choice on the student)

*Before class, teacher also writes **overall program goals** on board.*

The overall goals for these 2 sessions are listed on the board. By the end of these sessions you will have the information to: (Educator reads goals as posted on the board or newsprint pad)

- Consider adoption as one option when faced with a pregnancy
- Know the facts about adoption
- Discuss adoption using positive adoption language
- More fully understand the attitudes of your peers and parent(s)/guardian(s) towards adoption
- Consider adoption from the point of view of the birth parent, and adoptive parent

Let me give you some background about adoption. Very few teens in the United States consider or choose adoption as a pregnancy outcome option. For instance, recent data (from 2004) showed that the majority of pregnant teens (57%) gave birth and became a parent; 27% decided to terminate the pregnancy with an abortion; and 16% had an unintentional miscarriage. Less than 1% of pregnant teens in the U.S. chose adoption. Many teens do not consider an adoption plan in their decision making process. For the next two sessions, we are going to learn about the adoption option. We are not trying to sway you into making a specific decision about pregnancy outcomes. Rather, our goal is have more teenagers consider adoption as one possible outcome if they find themselves dealing with a pregnancy.

Today, we will learn about different kinds of adoption, as well as the different issues that are involved when considering adoption.

Please feel free to ask questions during our lesson. You are the expert on your own attitudes. We already have a lot of wisdom in this room and we will learn a lot from each other. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions during our sessions.

Before we start let’s review the overall goal for these sessions; The overall goal is for teens to consider adoption as a pregnancy option.

By the end of today’s session you will be able to:

- Understand the basic facts about adoption
- Discuss adoption using positive adoption language
- Discuss why or why not individuals would consider adoption as an option when faced with a pregnancy

Positive Adoption Language
5 minutes

(Teacher distributes handout to class on Positive Adoption Language)

At this time, the teacher should refer to possible negative language that was offered by students in the opening question of this lesson.

Positive Adoption Language

After the teacher distributes the handout, he/she asks the students:

Why do you think there are two lists: one for positive terms and one for negative terms? *(Teacher allows time for student feedback and then proceeds with the explanations below).*

Being positive and the words we use when we talk about a subject can tell others a lot about what we think and feel. Choosing positive adoption terms helps to counteract myths and falsehoods about adoption.

It is important to be aware of the words and phrases we use when we talk about adoption. Some words and phrases can be negative and hurtful. So we should try to use what is called “positive language.” Positive language refers to using words that do not have negative connotations or negative attitudes attached to them. It avoids many myths surrounding adoption.

For example, “Making an adoption plan” is a more positive description for open adoption than “giving up my child for adoption,” or “putting my child up for adoption.” The positive language emphasizes that the birth parent has an active role in planning the degree of openness and ongoing contact with the child. The negative language inaccurately implies that the birth parent has abandoned the child.

Also, it is sometimes offensive to ask an adopted person in the present tense if he/she is adopted. The reference should be made in the past tense, that is, a person *was* adopted, or *Were* you adopted? Adoption is a past event.

From our examples on the handout, you can see that some of the terms are positive and some of the terms are negative. For example:

- Using the words “birth parents” rather than “real parents”
- Using the word “parented” rather than “kept”
- Using the words “my child” rather than “own child”

The important thing to remember is that positive language acknowledges the many positives associated with adoption. It means using words that avoid negative connotations and negative attitudes attached to them. It avoids many myths surrounding adoption.

**Adoption Definitions/
Legal Issues**
5 minutes
*(Note to Teacher: Refer
to Teacher Supplement
entitled:
BACKGROUND
INFORMATION
ABOUT ADOPTION)*

*(Teacher writes down the
terms on the board as he
or she defines them.)*

Basic Adoption Terms And Legal Issues

Before we go further, we need to understand the basic terms and facts about adoption.

There is a difference between FOSTER CARE and ADOPTION.

What do you think the difference is between these two terms? *(Teacher allows time for student feedback).*

Foster Care is a way to temporarily create a responsible adult who will act as a guardian for a child. Adoption is a permanent legal transfer of all parental rights of a biological parent to adoptive parent(s). The key difference between adoption and foster care is that one is permanent and the other is temporary.

Which one is permanent?

(Teacher clarifies answers to be sure class knows answer). Right – good job!

In Ohio, a minor can consent to making an adoption plan on their own without their own parent’s permission.

The father of the baby also has rights to be a part of the adoption plan decision. However, he must first identify himself as the father by signing the birth certificate or signing up in the State’s Putative Father Registry.

There are two types of adoption - CLOSED (TRADITIONAL) ADOPTION in which the birth parent(s) do not know anything about the adoptive parents and have no contact with the child once the parental rights are transferred to the adoptive parents.

OPEN ADOPTION is the most common type of adoption today. Open adoption gives options for the birth parent(s) and adoptive parent(s) to communicate. Open adoption can take many forms from the birth parent(s) meeting the prospective adoptive parent(s); to sharing of information about the child after placement including letters, gifts, phone calls; and actual face to face meetings.

Before we go to the next part, do you have any questions?

**Small Group Discussion
List of 5 Why's and 5
Why Not's when
Considering Adoption
9 minutes**

*Divide class into small
groups*

*Note: Teacher uses
Cooperative Learning in
this small group activity.
Students are given four
roles in the group: Task
Master, Writer for Why's,
Writer for Why Not's, and
Reporter.*

***Reasons Why Teens May Or May Not Consider Adoption
Small Group Discussion***

Quite a lot of information, I know. Now that you have heard some of the facts about adoption, I would like to divide the class into small groups to examine some issues when considering adoption. Each group must decide on at least 5 reasons teens may consider adoption and at least 5 reasons teens may not consider adoption. Once these reasons are listed then, groups will rank them in order putting the most important reason at the top of the list.

Please get in groups of four (*Teacher divides class into groups of 4-5 students/group*).

Now that you are all in a group, I would like one person to stand up in each group . Okay, you will be the Task Master/Facilitator. Your job is to make sure that everyone stays on task and that each teammate offers at least one idea. Okay, thank you. Please sit down. Now I need another person in each group to stand up. You will be the Secretary of the Why's. Your job is to write down the 5 why's that your group comes up with for considering adoption. Okay, thank you. Please sit down. Now I need another person in each group to stand up. You will be the Secretary of the Why Not's. Your job is to write down the 5 why not's that your group comes up with for considering adoption. Okay, thank you. Please sit down. Now, I need 1-2 people in each group to stand. You will be the Reporter(s) of the group. Your job is to tell the rest of the class the why's and why not's that your group selected in the order that they ranked them. Okay?

Everybody ready? Begin.

**Small Groups Report out to Overall Class
9 minutes**

Compare student responses to facts about adoption presented earlier. Refer back to the beginning of this module for list of pro's and con's.

Okay, let's finish your discussions and prepare to report to the large group. Group 1, what are your top five reasons teens may consider adoption and why?

Group 2? Etc.

As each group explains their reasons, listen for factually inaccurate assumptions and encourage students to compare their reasoning to some of the facts you presented in the didactic section preceding this activity.

The following list are possible reasons why teens might consider adoption:

- *Teen's future educational and career goals*
- *Know someone involved in adoption with positive experience*
- *Support from parents, peers, father of child*
- *Not ready to parent*
- *Lifestyle*
- *Financially difficult to raise a child*
- *Can't provide for baby*
- *Better for the child*
- *Not mature enough to parent*
- *Provide baby with two parents)*

What are your top five reasons teens may not consider adoption, Group 1? Group 2? Etc.

Again, as each group explains their reason, listen for factually inaccurate assumptions and challenge students to compare their reasoning to some of the facts you presented in the didactic section preceding this activity.

The following list are possible reasons why teens might not consider adoption:

- *Want to be a parent*
- *Don't know about adoption*
- *The adopting parent won't love the child*
- *Don't know where to go for help*
- *Lack knowledge about the whole process*
- *No interest or support from parents*
- *No interest or support from peers*
- *Abandoning the baby*
- *Won't know about the child's future*
- *Child will have unstable homes*
- *Regret)*

As you can see there are a variety of reasons why some teens would consider adoption and some would not consider adoption.

Wrap Up and Homework
2 minutes
(Teacher distributes homework sheet and explains the interview process – due at the beginning of class the next day)

SUMMARY

Today we learned about some of the basic facts about adoption. We discussed different views of adoption. Friends and parents can have a large impact on whether teens even consider adoption as an option.

Your homework is to ask your parent/guardian and a friend who is not in this class the following:

Do you think that teenagers should consider adoption as an option if they are faced with a pregnancy? Why or Why not?

We will discuss this next class.

Thanks for today’s lesson. I enjoyed hearing your opinions. I really liked how..... *(share some positives of the lesson and student behavior, repeat some of the comments students made and praise efforts)*

I look forward to hearing what your parents/guardians and friends think about adoption.

Teacher posts goals and reviews overall program goal. Repeat that: The main goal is for teens to consider adoption if faced with a pregnancy

The overall goals for these 2 sessions are listed on the board. By the end of these sessions you will have the information to: (Educator reminds class of the goals as posted on the board or newsprint pad)

- Consider adoption as one option when faced with a pregnancy
- Know the facts about adoption
- Discuss adoption using positive adoption language
- More fully understand the attitudes of your peers and parent(s)/guardian(s) towards adoption
- Consider adoption from the point of view of the birth parent, and adoptive parent

**Objectives of Module II
1 minute**

(Teacher writes these objectives on the board before class begins)

Module II – Adoption is an Option: Consideration of an Adoption Plan

INTRODUCTION

Today, we will discuss the attitudes about making an adoption plan from different points of view. This will include attitudes of a pregnant teen's parents and friends, as well as the point of view of both the birth mother and the birth father.

By the end of today's class you will be able to:

- More fully understand the attitudes of your peers and parent(s)/guardian(s) towards adoption
- Consider adoption from the point of view of the birth parent, and adoptive parent

**Review of Homework
5 minutes**

Have newsprint with answers to responses to module one available to refer back to those answers during this session.

Note to Teacher: *Be prepared for personal disclosures of direct experiences with adoption. 60% of American adults say they have direct experience with adoption. Emphasize that every adoption is unique; no two are the same. Adoptions are highly individualized from all three perspectives in the adoption triad.*

Present situation of a scenario in which teen is considering making an adoption plan and parenting.

1 minute

REVIEW OF HOMEWORK: ATTITUDES TOWARD ADOPTION

I want to hear about your parents'/guardians' and/or friends' attitudes towards adoption that you learned in your homework assignment. Raise your hand if you spoke to one of your friends outside of this class about his/her attitudes toward adoption? What did they think about whether teenagers should consider adoption as an option if they are faced with a pregnancy? Why or Why not? (Teacher allows students to share their responses. Teacher clarifies whether the attitudes are based on myths or facts.

Who spoke to a parent/guardian about their attitudes toward adoption? What did they think about whether teenagers should consider adoption as an option if they are faced with a pregnancy? Why or Why not? (Teacher allows students to share their responses. Teacher clarifies whether the attitudes are based on myths or facts.

ADOPTION CONSIDERATION SCENARIO

We have been discussing adoption and people's attitudes about adoption. Now we are going to talk more about how teens would feel and what they would do if faced with making a decision whether to parent or make an adoption plan.

Here is the scenario: Talia, a teenage girl, finds out that she is pregnant. She has decided to have the baby. Now she is deciding between whether to parent or make an adoption plan.

<p>Break into small groups 12 minutes</p>	<p>For this activity, we will divide into small groups of 4-5 students each to discuss specific questions about what Talia should consider in making her decision.</p> <p>Please get into groups of 4-5 students (<i>Teacher divides class into groups of 4-5 students/group</i>).</p> <p>Now that you are all in a group, I would like one person to stand up in each group. Okay, you will be the <u>Task Master/Facilitator</u>. Your job is to make sure that everyone stays on task and that each teammate offers at least one idea. Okay, thank you. Please sit down. Now I need another person in each group to stand up. You will be the <u>Secretary</u>. Your job is to write down the group's response to each question. Okay, thank you. Please sit down. Now I need another person in each group to stand up. You will be the <u>Runner</u>. Your job is to get the question cards from me and then to give them to your Task Master. Okay, thank you. Please sit down. Now, I need the final 1-2 students in each group to stand. You will be the <u>Reporters</u> of the group. Your job(s) is to tell the rest of the class the answers that your group selected to each question. Make sense? Okay, runners come up and get your question card 1.</p> <p><i>After the Runners hand the card to the Task Master, the Task Master then reads the following information to the group:</i></p> <p>CARD 1: “What should Talia consider in making her decision to parent or plan for an adoption?” <i>We have 4 minutes to get your first card and discuss you answers in your small group. Make sure everyone has a chance to express his opinion. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.</i></p> <p><i>After 4 minutes has elapsed, the Teacher instructs the Runners to come up and get Card 2. After the Runner hands the card to the Task Master, the Task Master then reads the following information to the group:</i></p> <p>CARD 2 “Should Talia tell the father of the baby? Why or why not? If yes, when and how should she tell him?” <i>We have 4 minutes to get your second card and discuss your answers in your small group. Make sure everyone has a chance to express his opinion. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.</i></p> <p>CARD 3 “Should the girl tell her parents? Why or why not? If yes, when and how should she tell each parent?” <i>We have 4 minutes to get your third card and discuss your answers in your small group. Make sure everyone has a chance to express his opinion. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.</i></p> <p>Okay, now it is time to hear from the Reporters of each group. Let’s go one question at a time. (<i>Teacher calls on the reporter from each group and has them</i></p>
<p>Large Group Discussion</p>	

<p>10 minutes</p> <p>CARD 1</p> <p>Note to teacher: <i>This list is to provide you with possible questions students may raise. The list does not include all possible questions to consider.</i></p> <p>CARD 2</p> <p>Note to teacher: <i>This list is to provide you with possible responses students may raise. The list does not include all possible responses. If students reply with “No” then inform them that the birth father has the right to parent the child.</i></p> <p>Ask boys in class about their level of involvement if they were the father.</p>	<p><i>report out on their questions to Card 1).</i></p> <p>How did your group answer Card 1 “What should the girl consider in making her decision to parent or plan for an adoption?” <i>Call on Reporters from each group. Reinforce the reasons of her consideration of adoption that were discussed in the previous lesson.</i> <i>(Possible questions that Talia should consider may include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are Talia’s future educational goals?</i> • <i>If Talia decided to parent how could she complete her schooling and care for her baby at the same time?</i> • <i>Is Talia ready to become a parent?</i> • <i>Would Talia’s parents or the birth father help her parent the child?</i> • <i>Can Talia financially afford to raise the baby?</i> • <i>If Talia chose to make an adoption plan would she want to become involved in an open adoption? Why or why not?</i> • <i>What does Talia think would be best for her at this time?</i> • <i>What does Talia think would be best for the baby at this time?</i> • <i>Who can Talia talk to for help her with this decision?</i> <p>How did your group answer CARD 2 “Should Talia tell the father of the baby? Why or why not? If yes, when and how should she tell him?” <i>(Teacher calls on the Reporter from each group and has them report out on their questions to Card 2).</i></p> <p><i>(Possible answers to why she might not want to tell him include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>He may be upset with her</i> • <i>He may not agree with how she wants to handle the situation</i> • <i>Worry that he may not keep the information confidential</i> • <i>She is upset with him and is not able to communicate with him</i> • <i>She does not know who the father is</i> <p><i>(Possible answers to the “Why she would” question may include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>He is legally entitled to know about this decision and be involved in this decision</i> • <i>He can help her to decide on whether to parent or make an adoption plan</i> • <i>He can decide whether he wants to be involved in the parenting of the child</i> • <i>They can both talk it over and decide together whether they both want to parent the child, whether only one of them wants to parent the child or whether they want to make an adoption plan</i> • <i>Many males do care about the fact that they are the father of a child</i> <p><i>(Possible answers to the “when and how” question may include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>She should tell him as soon as she knows she is pregnant</i>
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CARD 3

Note: Even though some parents may become upset that their daughter is pregnant, in the majority of cases they will provide support for her regarding her decision-making process. Most parents want the best for their children. Teens should be strongly encouraged to talk to their parents. Certainly, there are situations in which the teen may rightly fear possible physical/emotional harm if they disclose this information. In those situations, teens should be strongly encouraged to talk to another responsible adult.

Minor's rights in

- As soon as she determines what she wants to do about the pregnancy
- She should tell him in person and discuss options

Make a statement about male involvement and ask the boys in the class the subsequent questions:

Often, males are excluded from the consideration of adoption; yet research shows that males have strong feelings about the decision and care about what happens to the child. In addition, the father, if he is known, has the right to parent the child, as well as the right to make an adoption plan or refuse permission for an adoption plan to proceed. These fatherhood rights exist regardless of his age.

Boys, what would you want to know about this situation if you were the father? How involved would you want to be in the decision to parent or make an adoption plan? (Call on boys in the class to answer these questions.)

How did your group answer CARD 3 “Should Talia tell her parent(s)/guardian(s)? Why or why not? If yes, when and how should she tell her parent(s)/guardian(s)?”

Call on reporters from each group.

(Possible answers to the “Why should she tell them” question may include:

- It would be helpful for Talia to tell them because they can help her think through her decision about what to do.
- Her parents/guardians will most likely find out she is pregnant because she will begin showing the pregnancy and should begin going to prenatal care for her health and the health of the baby.

(Possible answers to the “Why she might not tell them” question may include:

- Her parents/guardians may become upset that she is pregnant
- Her parents/guardians may not agree with her decision to parent or make an adoption plan
-

(Possible answers to the “When and how” question may include:

- As soon as she finds out she is pregnant so they can help her with her decision
- Tell them she has something that is hard to talk about but very important
- Have another person help her talk to her parent(s)/guardian such as her doctor or another trusted adult
- To honestly talk about her emotions and how she feels about the pregnancy
- To acknowledge to her parents/guardian that they may not be happy that she is pregnant, but that she really needs their emotional support and help
- To set aside a specific time that she can be alone with her parents/guardian that will be uninterrupted to talk to them

(Teacher discusses minors’ rights in making an adoption plan).

One thing that individuals need to be aware of is the fact that a teenager can

<p>adoption <i>(Ohio Revised Code, Section 3107.06). (2008)</i></p> <p>Grandparents and adoption</p> <p>Video segments of Birth Parent, Adoptive Parents, and Adoptive Parent who is also herself an Adoptee 15 minutes</p> <p>Note to Teacher:</p>	<p>make an adoption plan without his or her parent’s permission. Remember also from the last class, an <u>Adoption Procedure</u> must be approved by both birth parents, even if one or both birth parents are under age 18. So, even though the baby’s future grandparents may have a strong influence on the decision Talia will make about parenting or adoption, the future grandparents’ permission is not required for adoption.</p> <p>The only exception to this law is when the grandparent adopts the child, which happens sometimes. In the case of a grandparent adopting a child, the teen birth parent(s) still must approve the adoption for it to take place.</p> <p><i>Video Segments On Adoption</i></p> <p>So far, we have focused most of our lessons about the Adoption Option from the perspective of a birth parent, especially a teen birth parent. However, there are at least 2 other perspectives in the Adoption Triad that have a major impact on what happens in an adoption: The Adoptive Parent(s) and the Adopted Child. We will now watch some video clips from actual birth parents, adoptive parents, and an adoptee.</p>
<p><i>You have two DVDs. One has an imprint which says “Adoption is an Option” and Ohio Department of Health. The other DVD is labeled DVD #2. The first DVD was created specifically for this pilot project. The three videos on DVD #2 are from an organization called AdoptHelp. We are not endorsing this agency in any way. All agencies are different and should be researched before using them. Please concentrate on the experiences of these different members of the adoption triad.</i></p>	
<p>Video Segment 1: Birth Parent</p>	<p><i>VIDEO 1: BIRTH PARENTS</i> <i>(Teacher plays the video clip)</i></p>

Use the Birth Mother video on first DVD labeled “Adoption is an Option” and Ohio Department of Health

Class reaction/discussion

Keep discussion focused on the reasons why this birth parent chose to make an adoption plan and what she is saying about the open adoption process. Also discuss how the birth parent feels now about having made an adoption plan?

Note: This birth mother says that the birth father did not initially agree with her decision to make an adoption plan. However, he signed the papers which gave his consent for the adoption to proceed.

Video Segment 2:

Adoptive Parents

Choose ONE of the three adoptive parent videos from the two DVDs: i.e.

show either the

1. Adoptive parents video from DVD #2 which

shows Caucasian Adoptive Parents

OR

2. Adoptive Parents 1 or

3. Adoptive Parents 2

from the DVD labeled “Adoption is an Option” and Ohio Department of Health which depicts

African American

Adoptive Parents.

Depending on class time, the teacher can choose to show the entire video or

What did this birth parent say about her experience? What were the main points you saw in this video clip?

(Teacher allows students to respond. Help students understand the decision making process of the birth mother?)

Some of the main points include the following:

- Ability to choose the adoptive parents and get to know them
- Birth Mother’s views about open adoption and what she was looking for in the adoptive parents she chose
- Birth Mother’s ultimate satisfaction with decision to make an adoption plan and the open adoption process
- Her acknowledgment that this was a hard decision and why she thinks this was the best decision for her child and for herself
- Feeling good about helping another couple create a family
- The fact that she is able to see her child as part of the adoption plan
- How she will explain her decision to make an adoption plan to the child when the child is older

VIDEO 2: ADOPTIVE PARENTS

(Teacher plays the video clip)

What did this (these) adoptive parent(s) say about being adoptive parents? What were the main points you saw in this video clip?

(Teacher allows students to respond. Help students understand the adoption process from the point of view of the adoptive parents?)

Some of the main points for all three videos include the following:

- Love and bonding of the adoptive parents for adoptive children is automatic
- The adoptive parents spoke positively about the open adoption process
- You can sense the love these parents have for their adopted child through their emotions and how they hold the child
- There was discussion about the openness of the adoption process and how all parties knew what is going on and felt comfortable with the decision

Additional points for Adoptive Parents 1 and 2

- Discussion about why it was important for these adoptive parents to be

select individual chapters which are listed on the DVD cover for "Adoption is an Option" Ohio Department of Health. At a minimum: show the chapters on Why they chose open adoption; Bonding with their child; How the adoption plan is working; and What they will tell their child about the adoption.

Additional note to teacher: The parent in Adoptive Parents 1 is a Pediatrician who specializes in Adolescent Medicine. The mother in Adoptive Parents 2 was adopted herself in 1975 in a closed adoption process.

**Class Reaction/
Discussion**

Keep discussion focused on how the adoptive parents felt about the open adoption process; their feelings about bonding with their child; their relationship with the birth parent(s). Help students understand that the majority of adoptive parents are loving, capable providers who feel an immediate bond for their adopted children.

Note to teacher: In some communities there have been high profile media stories or exceptional instances of a foster

parent who abused a foster child. These instances are rare, and in

involved in an open adoption rather than a closed adoption process

- *What and how they will tell their children about the adoption when they get older*
- *The importance of the birth parent in the lives of their adopted child*

the Ohio case involved a temporary foster parent, not a permanent parent who adopted a child. In Adoptive Parents 1 there is a specific chapter which can be shown that describes the difference between Adoption and Foster Care.

ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS WHICH THE TEACHER MAY ALSO WANT TO SHOW:

Cultural Issues Related to Adoption

A chapter in Adoptive Parents 1 specifically addresses attitudes toward adoption in the African American community. Both Adoptive Parents 1 and 2 depict African American adoptive parents

Adult Adoptee from Adoptive Parents 2 Class Reaction/ Discussion

Keep discussion focused on how the adoptee felt growing up and why she felt strongly about open adoption as an adult.

Wrap up and Local Adoption Agency Resources

ADDITIONAL SEGMENTS ON CULTURAL ISSUES AND THE VIEW OF AN ADULT ADOPTEE

Cultural Issues Related to Adoption

Adoptive Parents 1 specifically addresses the issue of adoption in the African American community.

- *Help students understand that there are different cultural attitudes about adoption that influence whether a person considers adoption.*
- *Cultural attitudes also influence the matching process in adoption, particularly when the birth parent or the adoptive parent has a preference for the adopted child's race / ethnic background (In the Birth Mother video, she specifically states she was looking for a bi-racial adoptive parent couple)*

Adult Adoptee

(Teacher plays the chapter from Adoptive Parents 2)

What did this person say about being an adoptee?

What were the main points addressed in this video?

Some main points include the following:

- *This Adult Adoptee states that her adoptive parents treated her exactly like the other children in the family throughout her life*
- *The reasons why she sought out an open adoption rather than a closed adoption when she and her husband adopted their child*
- *The fact that open adoption allows the adoptee to know about his/her background and medical history and the process is private rather than secretive*

SUMMARY

Adoption trends in the U.S. have changed dramatically in the last two generations. Nowadays, most adoptions in the U.S. have some degree of

2 minutes

openness.

There are local resources in the community that participate in the adoption process. A list of adoption agencies that the State of Ohio has certified is available at www.jfs.ohio.gov/oapl. There may be other resources not listed. Write the names and phone numbers of adoption agencies listed from your county on the Board. See attached Ohio Adoption Resource List

Teens involved in a pregnancy have to make a very difficult decision about 3 options. Important decisions should be made informatively and carefully.

SCENARIO:
Talia, a teenage girl, finds out that she is

pregnant. She has decided to have the baby. Now she is deciding between whether to parent or make an adoption plan.

CARD 1 “What should Talia consider in making her decision to parent or plan for an adoption?”

You have 4 minutes to get your first card and discuss you answers in your small group. Make sure everyone has a chance to express his opinion. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

CARD 2 “Should Talia tell the father of the baby? Why or why not? If yes, when and how should she tell him?”

You have 4 minutes to get your first card and discuss you answers in your small group. Make sure everyone has a chance to express his opinion. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

CARD 3 “Should Talia tell her parents? Why or why not? If yes, when and how should she tell each parent?”

You have 4 minutes to get your first card and discuss you answers in your small group. Make sure everyone has a chance to express his opinion. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Module I - Adoption is an Option
Student Handout #1

ADOPTION VOCABULARY

Being positive with the words we use when we talk about a subject can tell others a lot about what we think and feel.

Choosing the following *positive* adoption terms listed below will help to counteract the myths/falsehoods about adoption as a way of creating a family.

Positive Terms

Birthparent

Birthmother

My child

Making an adoption plan

Finding a family to parent your child

Deciding to parent the child

Born to unmarried parents

Was adopted

Terminate parental rights

Negative Terms

Real parent/natural parent

Unwed mother/real mother

Adopted child: own child

Giving away, Giving up your child

Putting your child up for adoption

Keeping your baby

Illegitimate

Is adopted

Give up

Other adoption terms to know:

Adoption	Permanent transfer of all parental rights of biological parents to adoptive parent(s).
Foster care	Temporary assignment of a responsible adult to act as guardian for a child.
Closed adoption	The traditional adoption process - birth parents know nothing about the adoptive parents and have no contact with the child.
Open adoption	The most common adoption process today - provides options to birth parents and adoptive parents for contact with each other and the child. Determined when adoption plan is made.

Module I - Adoption is an Option
Student Handout #2

TEENS, ADOPTION AND OHIO LAW

If you become pregnant or father a pregnancy-what are your rights in Ohio if you choose an adoption plan?

Minors can consent to making an adoption plan on their own without their own parents' permission.

Consent to an adoption must be given 72 hours after the birth of the child.

The father of the baby also has rights to be part of the adoption plan decision. However, he must first identify himself as the father by signing the birth certificate or signing up in Ohio's Putative Father Registry.

To make an adoption plan the birth parent(s) contact(s) a licensed adoption agency or an attorney.

The birth parent(s) decide(s) whether they want an open or closed adoption.

Once the birth parent(s) make(s) an adoption plan, Ohio requires that the agency or court conduct a home study and interview with prospective adoptive parents.

Module I - Adoption is an Option
Student Handout #3 – Homework

ADOPTION ATTITUDE INTERVIEWS

Ask a friend who is not in your health class:

Do you think teens should consider adoption if faced with a pregnancy? YES or NO

Why or Why not?

Ask a parent, guardian or other trusted adult:

Do you think teens should consider adoption if faced with a pregnancy? YES or NO

Why or Why not?

ADOPTION EDUCATION - FACT SHEETS

RATES OF ADOPTION IN THE US

- In 2004, there were 729,000 pregnancies to 15-19 year olds in the US. Of those, 57% resulted in a live birth, 27% in an induced abortion, and 16% in fetal loss.
- The adoption rate was 8.7% before 1973 and fell to approximately 1% in 2002.
- Approximately 95% of unmarried pregnant teens chose adoption 40-50 years ago.
- Only one in four birth parents is an adolescent and most placers are now in their 20s.
- Most Americans (60%) have familiarity with adoption through personal experience or through friends and relatives.

ATTITUDES TOWARD ADOPTION

- Over one-half of adults have a very favorable and one-third have a somewhat favorable opinion toward adoption. Less than 10% have an unfavorable opinion.
- Adults who are most supportive of adoption tend to have a higher level of education, are female, and White.
- African Americans have lower rates of choosing adoption as a pregnancy resolution. This may be due to long held cultural norms and attitudes which have traditionally included the role of the extended family in “informal adoption”.
- Most of the studies on teen attitudes on adoption were conducted in the 1980s and 1990s. Many of the studies were retrospective and descriptive and most were conducted on samples of pregnant teens rather than general adolescent populations

VARIABLES ASSOCIATED WITH TEENS' DECISION TO CONSIDER ADOPTION:

- **Knowledge** about adoption
- **Context** in which the decision is being made (e.g. personal attitudes, educational and vocational goals, influence of significant others such as parents and birth fathers)
- **Beliefs** about parental responsibility and the needs of children

TEENS' CONCERNS ABOUT ADOPTION

- Lack of knowledge about the facts surrounding adoption
- Concerns about “feelings of abandoning the baby”
- Not knowing what is involved and what to expect with adoption

ADOPTION EDUCATION - FACT SHEETS

FACTORS RELATED TO SOME TEENS CHOOSING ADOPTION RATHER THAN PARENTING :

- Being non-Hispanic White
- Having an intact family
- Being an older teen
- Having completed more years of education
- Having higher educational aspirations
- Being from a suburban residence
- Having a parent with more years of education
- Higher socioeconomic status
- Having personal knowledge of or experience with adoption
- Positive influence of the teen's mother toward adoption
- Preference for adoption by the male partner
- Positive peer approval for adoption
- Not personally feeling ready to parent
- Thinking that the decision was in the best interest of baby for financial reasons
- Feeling that the child needed two parents
- Believing that parenting would interfere with their educational goals.

REASONS OFFERED BY TEENS FOR RECOMMENDING ADOPTION:

- Not mature enough to parent at this point in their lives
- Providing the baby with two parents
- Being financially incapable of raising the child.
- Making an adoption plan was mature, responsible, unselfish, caring and thoughtful.

INFORMATION ABOUT BIRTH FATHERS:

- Factors related to lack of involvement of the birth father in the adoption plan are financial issues; attitudes of adoption agencies; family pressure; and poor relationships with the birthmother.
- Studies show that rather than being uninterested and uncaring, the adoption decision was emotionally distressing for many birth fathers.
- The legal status of birth fathers is left to the individual states.
- The legal rights of both parents must be voluntarily terminated or relinquished for an adoption to proceed forward.
- Registration in the State's putative father registry helps protect the rights of birth fathers.

ADOPTION EDUCATION - FACT SHEETS

TYPES OF ADOPTION

- CLOSED (TRADITIONAL) ADOPTION is the process in which there is no contact between the birth parent and adoptive parent and the birth child was not given information about the birth parents.
- OPEN ADOPTION refers to planned communication between the birth parent, adoptee, and adoptive parents. It can take many forms from the birth parent meeting the prospective adoptive parent; to sharing of information after placement including letters, gifts, phone calls; to actual face to face meetings. This contact can be limited to the pre-placement process or continue for years after the adoption placement.
- Adoption is more likely to proceed forward if the birth mother has an opportunity to choose and or meet the prospective adoptive parents.
- Open adoption improves self esteem by providing an avenue for responsible decision-making and providing a sense of control.
- In a narrow legal definition per Ohio law, adoption is a relinquishment of birthparents' legal right to parent. An Ohio Court will not enforce a birth parent's efforts to be involved in his/her child's life after an adoption has taken place. On the other hand, an Ohio Court will not block a birth parent from being involved in his/her adopted child's life if the adoptive parent(s) wants the birth parent(s) involvement.

OUTCOMES OF ADOPTION

- Adolescents who chose adoption rather than parenting have slightly less satisfaction with their decision but are more likely to complete their education/training, delay marriage, be employed, and delay a subsequent pregnancy
- Birth parents involved in open adoption are better able to work through the grief process than those who have no contact with the adoptive family.
- Key factors to a positive long term outcome for birth parents include:
 - Not feeling coerced in the adoption decision
 - Being able to express feelings of loss and to receive social support
 - Being empowered to choose the adoptive family
 - Having some contact with the adoptive family after placement
 - Having information about the child's well being
 - Resolving feelings of grief and coming to terms with the adoption decision
 - Maintaining self esteem and incorporating being a birthparent into one's identity
 - Overcoming the impact of adoption on future intimate relationships

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT ADOPTION

BASIC ADOPTION DEFINITIONS

An adoption is a process of having a biological parent(s) legally decide to have their child permanently raised by an adoptive parent(s).

A Birth Parent is also called a biological parent. For instance, you may commonly hear about a birth mother and a birth father. These terms are used for two persons who are the genetic parents of the child. Birth parents have parental rights and responsibilities defined by law, even if they are under age 18. However, if the birth parent(s) choose adoption, the adoptive parent(s) assume sole responsibility for that child.

An Adopted Child is a person under age 18, who has been legally adopted by an adult who is not their birth parent.

An Adoptive Parent or Adoptive Couple is the person or couple who legally become the permanent parent(s) of an adopted child.

The word **Adoption Triad** refers to all members of the adoption process meaning the birth parent, adoptive parent, and adopted child. This word emphasizes that there are at three important perspectives in the adoption process.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION

Unlike adoption, **Foster Care**, is a way to temporarily create a responsible adult who will act as a guardian for a child. In foster care, the ultimate goal is to reunite the child with his or her biological parent(s). In foster care, the biological parent still has some legal rights such as the right to know about the child's home, medical care and schooling. Sometimes, the reunion of foster child and birth parent never happens. Sometimes a birth parent relinquishes his/her rights of parenting and gives permission for a foster parent to permanently adopt the child.

The key difference between adoption and foster care is that one is ***permanent*** and the other is ***temporary***.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT ADOPTION

LAWS REGARDING ADOPTION

The law states that an **adoption procedure** must be approved by both birth parents, even if one or both birth parents are under age 18. If the birth father cannot be identified, then the birth mother's decision to make an adoption plan is sufficient. (*Ohio Revised Code, Section 3107.06*) (2008).

An **adoption procedure** involves the birth parents' voluntary and permanent relinquishment of their parental rights regarding a particular adopted child. A Court of Law certifies the adoption no sooner than 72 hours after the birth. (*Ohio Revised Code, Section 3107.08*) (2008)

Ohio law requires that there has to be a home study conducted on the proposed adoptive couple to determine whether the adoptive parents are "suitable to adopt."
(*Ohio Revised Code, Section 3107.031*) (2008).

There are two things a birth father can do to insure his involvement in an adoption procedure: (1) sign his name on his child's birth certificate; or (2) register with Ohio's **Putative Father Registry**. This Registry is a data bank designed to allow birth fathers to identify themselves for the purpose of establishing their legal right to notification should an adoptive plan be under consideration for their child. (*Ohio Revised Code, Section 3107.062*) (2008).

CLOSED AND OPEN ADOPTION

Traditionally, adoption was a secretive process and the birth parent often never knew what happened to their birth child. But, now there is an adoption process called **Open Adoption**.

Closed Adoption was the traditional adoption process in which all identifying information about the birth mother, birth child, and adoptive parent(s) is concealed from the other triad members. That is, the birth parent knows nothing about the adoptive parent and vice versa. Also, the adopted child knows nothing about the birth parent. Sometimes closed adoptions are called traditional adoptions.

Most adoptions nowadays in the U.S. are open adoptions.

An **Open Adoption** refers to the wide continuum or wide range of options within adoption that recognizes the child's connection to both the birth family and adoptive family. There are many options available in an open adoption. The birth parent(s) can select the adoptive parent(s). Usually an agreement made by the birth parent(s) and prospective adoptive parent(s) involved can range from the sharing of only very basic information, to exchanging information through a third party (like an adoption agency), to sharing total information and/or having ongoing contact. The agreement is negotiable at all stages of the adopted child's growth and development, but only the adoptive parent has legal authority to change the agreement, as he/she is the child's legal parent.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT ADOPTION

CLOSED AND OPEN ADOPTION *(continued)*

In Ohio, open adoption agreements are based on trust and not enforceable in a Court of Law. In Open Adoption, there is a relinquishment of birthparents' legal right to parent. That is to say, an Ohio Court will not enforce a birth parent's efforts to be involved in his/her child's life after an adoption has taken place. On the other hand, an Ohio Court will not block a birth parent from being involved in his/her adopted child's life if the adoptive parent(s) wants the birth parent(s) involvement.

Openness in an adoption is important for many people because it may provide a birth parent comfort and satisfaction in knowing about the well-being of the child they birthed. It also can provide them with the option of maintaining ongoing contact with the adoptive parent(s) and adoptive child. It is on a continuum so that after the adoptive parent(s) legally become the parent(s), contact can stop or remain open throughout the entire life of the child.

There can be a sense of loss or grief that is experienced by the birth parent. This is common and varies from individual to individual. Open adoptions may help to reduce this sense of loss by helping the birth parent know that their birth child is being cared for by a loving parent or parents.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT ADOPTION

AGENCY AND INDEPENDENT ADOPTIONS

An Agency Adoption means that an organization specializing in arranging adoptions helps to match birth parents with adoptive parents. Many agencies have applications from people and couples who want to adopt a child. These agencies can share adoptive parent applications with birth parents, and the birth parents can choose the adoptive parents. If the agency is certified by the State of Ohio, the agency can submit the proper adoption documents to a Court of Law and finalize the adoption procedure without the birth parent going to Court. This is helpful to many people. Some agencies provide options counseling to pregnant clients. Some agencies provide counseling and other support services to birth parents and adoptive parents including after the adoption has taken place. All agencies are different and should be researched before using them. Adoption agencies work with birth parents and adoptive parents to try to meet both of their needs regarding the terms of an open adoption.

The State of Ohio publishes a list of registered adoption agencies in each county at www.jfs.ohio.gov/oapl. Attached at end of Module 2.

An Independent Adoption means a person, usually a lawyer, rather than an adoption agency, arranges the match between birth parent and adoptive parent. Just as with the adoption agencies, some independent adoption professionals may not provide comprehensive services such as options counseling and ongoing social support. The services of the lawyer should be researched before using them. In Ohio, an attorney is not allowed to represent both the person seeking to adopt and the parent placing a child for adoption in the same case. (*Ohio Revised Code, Section 3107.011*) (2008).