

Monthly Calendar

May 2023 Events and Programs

ADULT ADOPTEES, BIRTH PARENTS & DNA DISCOVERIES

General Discussion Meetings

Support and discussion groups for adult adoptees, birth parents, siblings, adoptive parents, prospective parents, professionals, and anyone interested in exploring the lifelong journey of adoption. Individuals from any location are encouraged to join. All meeting times are shown in Eastern Time. Meetings are held via Zoom and registration is required to receive the meeting link. For more information on General Discussion Meetings and a list of upcoming special topics, please visit our website at <http://bit.ly/GDMatANC>.

General Discussion Meeting Dates: Virtual, and listed as Eastern Time (ET)

May 6, Thurs., 7-9 PM led by facilitators Linda & Barb

May 9, Tues., 7-9 PM led by facilitators Marni & Mindy

May 11, Thurs., 7-9 PM led by facilitators Kim & Denice
Special Topic: Approaching Your Journey with Confidence

May 18, Thurs., 7-9 PM led by facilitators Dottie & Estes

May 25, Thurs., 8-10:00 PM led by facilitators Barbara & Dan

Special Topic for May: Approaching You Journey with Confidence Thursday, May 11, 7:00-9:00 PM ET

Because adoption is a lifelong and complex journey, each person has their own experiences and feelings to navigate. We may wonder if our feelings, thoughts, and/or decisions are unusual or unique. We may wonder if others will understand or relate to our experiences as we pave new paths forward. In this special topic meeting, we will discuss and share strategies about how we can approach our journeys with confidence. This virtual program is facilitated by Kim and Denice.

Come to share, or listen, or both! All are welcome!

Register at <http://bit.ly/CalendarANC>.

Birth Mother Support Group (Virtual) Wednesday, May 3, 7:00-9:00 PM ET

Our Birth Mother Support Group provides a safe and supportive environment to help with the complexities that are often part of the adoption experience. The meetings are open to birth mothers connected by the lifelong journey of adoption and are an opportunity for birth mothers to encourage one another in their healing process through discussion and interaction. Birth mothers who have experienced closed adoptions or adoptions with varying degrees of openness attend this meeting. We invite you to join this group of women, who are at different places on the same journey, to give and receive understanding and support. The group is facilitated by Lindsey and Nikki.

Register at <http://bit.ly/CalendarANC>.

DNA Discovery Support Group (Virtual) Tuesday, May 2, 8:00-10:00 PM ET

If you have either found family using commercial DNA testing or been found by family who used commercial DNA testing (examples of commercial DNA testing are Ancestry.com, Family Tree DNA, 23&Me, My Heritage, etc.) then this is the group for you. You do not need to have a formal adoption connection to be in this group, but you do need to have a DNA discovery for this group to be relevant to you. Finding family, or being found - whether you are looking or not - is a major life event. It can upend long-held beliefs about ourselves and challenge the very things that make us feel like, well..., ourselves. This group will focus on supporting each other during and after such DNA discoveries. These are not one time events; they are lifelong journeys. This peer support group is not meant to delve into the technical aspects of understanding your DNA results, but rather serve as additional support on your personal journey to integrate your DNA findings into your life. The focus of this group is on the emotional journey, and not the technical aspects of DNA results or the interpretation of results. This group is facilitated by Becky and Oliver.

Register at <http://bit.ly/CalendarANC>.

FOR ALL: Monday Evening Speaker Series (Virtual)

Facing Shame: How I was forced out of hiding and into a spotlight where I found the freedom of truth and acceptance.

Monday, May 8, 8:00-9:00 PM ET
presented by **Cathryn Vogeley**

Whether you are a first mother or an adoptee, you probably know shame. Cathryn Vogeley never intended to write the story, *I Need To Tell You*, of her pregnancy as an unwed mother. But during her first writing course taught by Blackbird author Jennifer Lauck, Cathryn reacted to Lauck's tale of being 'ripped from her mother's arms'. Through her tears, Cathryn disclosed (in private) to Lauck that she relinquished her baby in 1969. Jennifer insisted that Cathryn write her story because this is where her pain lived. Three years later, Cathryn had a finished manuscript using Susan Siskin as a pseudonym because using her own name was unimaginable. But when she learned a credible memoir must include the author's true name, Cathryn discovered her self-image was still shrouded in incapacitating shame. Cathryn talks about her process of overcoming this barrier and finding freedom from that heavy mantle she wore for decades.

There Will Be Drama: Staging Our Adoption Stories

Monday, May 15, 8:00-9:00 PM ET
presented by **Julie Coppens**

"My birth was a covert operation; my adoption, a comedy of errors... and it's pretty much been a Lifetime movie tearjerker ever since," writes journalist/theatremaker Julie Coppens. Julie first conceived *THE STORK FILES: TRUE STORIES OF ADOPTION, ABORTION, AND HAVING NO CHOICE* as a magazine article, examining the dramatic power of adoption stories through time; now, seven years and a few Supreme Court decisions later, she's developing it as a stage work, set to premiere in June at the 2023 Cincinnati Fringe Festival.

Julie hopes to inspire the kind of personal truth-telling that cuts through political rhetoric, deepening our understanding of these complex social phenomena that have such profound impacts on our lives and communities." Learn how you can be part of *THE STORK FILES*, while discovering connections between your own unlikely life story and a dramatic tradition as old as theatre itself.

Programs are FREE of charge.
Registration is required.

TO REGISTER for any program listed, please visit our our calendar:
<https://bit.ly/CalendarANC>



Risks and Implications of Unlicensed Adoption Brokers in Private Adoption

Monday, May 22, 8:00-9:00 PM ET

presented by **Kelsey Vander Vliet Ranyard**

The landscape of private adoption has changed dramatically with the rise of the Internet. With fifty different sets of state statutes governing private adoption across the country, and approximately half of all adoptions now being interstate, there is cause for confusion. Not only does the digital world complicate adoption, but the rising presence of unlicensed adoption entities in this field throws an additional wrench in the process.

When unregulated, unqualified, and unlicensed adoption entities broker the placements of children with no structure of oversight or discipline, our children, birth families, and adoptive families have already been failed. In this session, Kelsey speaks to the legal research that Ethical Family Building has been doing for several years and the movement they are now building to prohibit unlicensed adoption brokers from operating and advertising. Additionally, Kelsey talks about the risks posed to all parties when working with an adoption broker, and how to protect yourself and others

FAMILIES & YOUTH

Family Ties Monthly Gathering & Teen TEA (In-Person or Virtual) with special presentation: "Co-regulation as a Superpower" with LaToya Logan, MSSA, LISW-S, ABD

Thursday, May 11, 6:00 PM (Dinner), 6:30 -7:30 PM Program (in-person or virtual)
12200 Fairhill Road, Floor A3, Cleveland

Join us as our Family Ties Program hosts "Co-regulation as a Superpower: Creating Internal Safety." Families interested in our Family Ties Program, as well as visitors wishing to participate in this program designed to improve communications, behavior, and increase healthy interactions are welcome!

In-person attendees may join us for dinner followed by the presentation for parents, and programs for young children, and teens. Teens ages 11+ will meet separately after dinner for Teen TEA, our monthly teen group that provides a safe place for youth to share their truth, advocate for and support one another, and learn more about themselves. Children 10 and under will engage in structured and supervised activities. This program welcomes adoptive, kinship, and foster families with children of all ages the second Thursday of every month welcome! Register at <http://bit.ly/CalendarANC>.