

WHERE THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SELF MEET: UNDERSTANDING NURSES' LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ADOPTION

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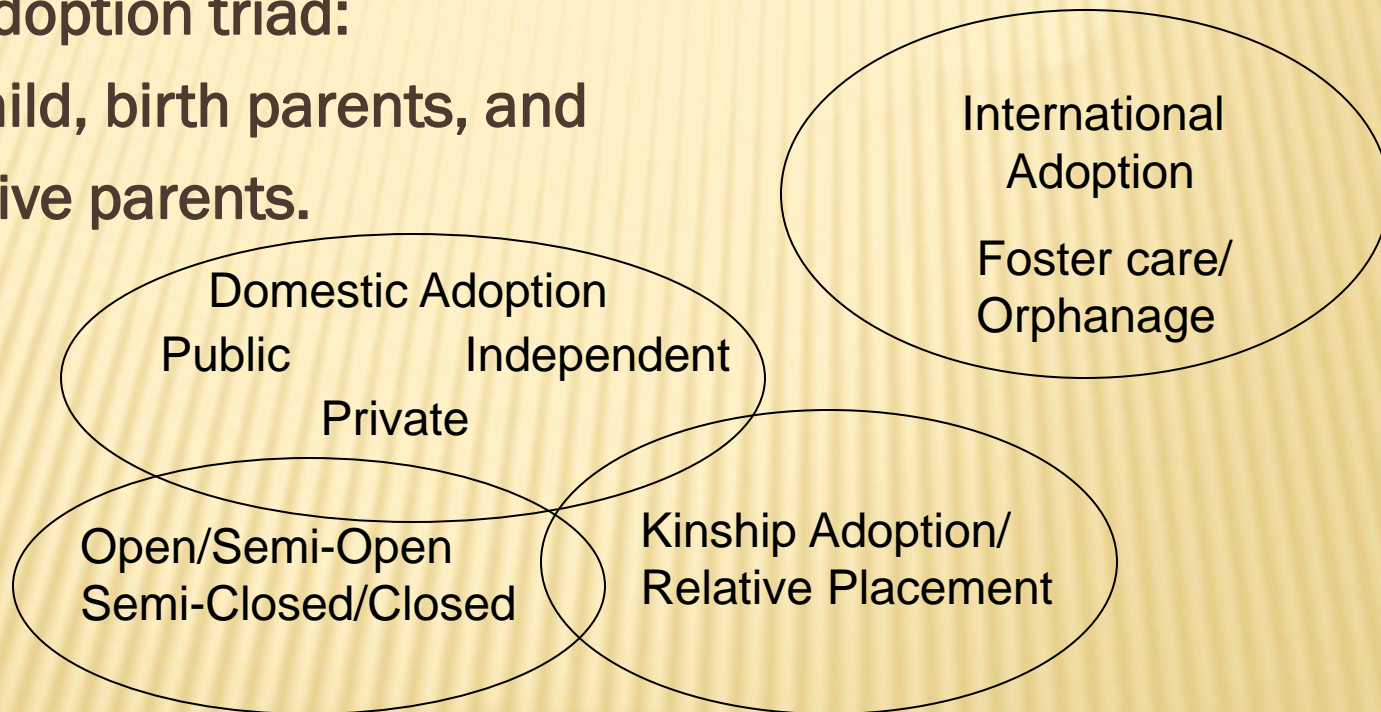
OBJECTIVES

At the end of the presentation:

- ✘ The participant will be able to describe the lived experiences of nurses who may be *members* of the adoption triad and *givers* of care to this triad (professional and personal self).
- ✘ The participant will be able to identify at least two nursing interventions related to care of the adoption triad.

TYPES OF ADOPTION IN U.S.

The adoption triad:
the child, birth parents, and
adoptive parents.



INTRODUCTION

Nurses render care to members of the adoption triad:

- + the birth parents,
- + adoptive parents
- + the child.

Yet, understanding nurses' perceptions of and interactions with members of the adoption triad (AT) has not been explored.



ADOPTION TRIAD: BIRTH PARENTS

- ✘ Only about 25% of birthmothers are teenagers. The profile of birthmothers is one who has other children and is in their 20s (Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, 2006).
- ✘ Regardless of circumstances, nurses often are the first caregivers to interact with women as they are faced with an unintended pregnancy, which account for 49% of all pregnancies (Simmonds & Likis, 2005).

ADOPTIVE PARENTS

- ✘ Adoptive parents differ from other parents in that they are typically older, more educated, married, and have higher incomes (Adamec & Miller, 2007).
- ✘ Parental post-adoption depression (PAD) may affect adoptive parents. Rates are estimated to be the same or higher than postpartum depression (10-15%) (Foli, South, Lim, under revision; Payne, Fields, Meuchel, Jaffe, & Jha, 2010; Senecky, Hanoch, Inbar, Horesh, Diamond, Bergman, & Apter, 2009).

CHILDREN WHO ARE ADOPTED

- ✘ Approximately 1,782,000 children who are adopted live in the U.S. (Vandivere, Malm, & Radel, 2009).
- ✘ Types of adoption:
 - + Public domestic adoptions account for 38% of adoptions (677,000 children).
 - + Private domestic adoptions (37%) are facilitated either through adoption agencies or independent parties, such as attorneys. There are 661,000 children who have been adopted in this manner.
 - + In 2007, children adopted internationally accounted for 25% of all adopted children or 444,000 children (Vandivere, Malm, & Radel, 2009).

CHILDREN WHO ARE ADOPTED

- × Questions:
 - + Why did my parents relinquish me?
 - + What about my medical history?
 - + Should I look for my birth parents?
- × Unique dynamics:
 - + Trans-racial/trans-ethnic
 - + Older child adoptions
 - + Special needs
 - + Attachment

PURPOSE OF STUDY

To explore the lived experiences of nurses and the care rendered to the adoption triad in various clinical settings using a hermeneutic phenomenological approach.

METHOD: PROCEDURE

Recruitment: Via the ANA electronic newsletter, *Nursing Insider*.

Inclusion Criteria: Nurses who currently have or have had experience in rendering care to members of the adoption triad.

IRB Approval: The study was given exempt status.

METHOD: PROCEDURE

Recruitment: Via the ANA electronic newsletter, *Nursing Insider*.

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METHOD: PROCEDURE

At the completion of a web based quantitative survey, participants were invited to add narratives about their *own experiences in caring for the AT*.

From these responses, coding was conducted and themes revealed via Colaizzi's (adapted) qualitative method. Reflexive notes and discussions were maintained; one researcher is an adoptive mother.

Seventeen narratives were coded by the researchers. Twelve of the nurses who forwarded narratives were also AT mothers.



THEMES

Themes that emerged from the data were:

- ❖ *Where the personal and professional self meet*
- ❖ *A rollercoaster of emotions and attitudes*
- ❖ *Unique contexts of adoptive families*
- ❖ *Bringing adoption triad mother's needs to light/meeting the needs*

THEME # 1

Where the
Personal and
Professional Self
Meet: Caregiver
and Receiver of
Care

“I see so many issues from both sides”

“I am an adoptive parent of two grown children who were both placed with me and my husband from the hospital where they were born... I am very conscious of how the process works not only as an adoptive mother, but as a nurse who has been in maternal-child nursing for 23 years.”

THEME # 2

The Paradox of
Adoption:
Loss and Joy; Grief
and Healing

“My experience as an adoptive mother has been an emotional roller coaster, depression, and the whole nine yards... Every day is a challenge and some days more than most are a struggle depending on the circumstances... I have had personal hurt & pain as an adoptive mother, & in providing support or education.”

THEME # 3

Unique contexts
of adoptive
families:
“We all have a
history”

“...just as no two finger prints are the same, neither are there two children, two couples, situations, or circumstances. We are far too quick to judge and to assume when we should be far quicker to listen and to be present in order to promote the well-being of our clients.”

THEME # 4

Bringing AT
Mother's Needs
to Light and
Meeting Those
Needs: Improving
education,
language,
advocacy, support,
communication

“...There are several areas we could improve. First and foremost is education. Training shouldn't have to come through another agency through the offering of continuing education units; it ought to be a part of the nursing curriculum and not just a week or so. The history, the legalities, the language, and resources of adoption should be explored as well as the desired outcomes for all involved.”

NURSING INTERVENTIONS

- ❖ Psychosocial support for all three members of AT:
 - + Nonjudgmental acceptance/listening
 - + Therapeutic communication
 - + Recognition of uniqueness of narratives
- ❖ Bridging services and information
- ❖ Professional implications:
 - ❖ Integration and emphasis of adoption content in nursing curricula
 - ❖ Using “adoption friendly” language

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

- ✘ Adoption triad nurses may hold dual roles in adoption contexts, those of caregiver and adoptive or birth parent.
- ✘ The themes that emerged reflected insights gained from both personal and professional roles and offer specific interventions that would enhance psychosocial functioning pre-adoption as relinquishment decisions are made and postadoption as adoptive moms make the transition to parenting.
- ✘ Nursing education and practice guidelines should include care rendered to the adoption triad.

Questions?

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