Solutions for Successful Adoption
By
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For me, asking for help felt like walking through hell. How could I trust the people who had betrayed me to become the ones who would intervene, protect me, or help me heal?

Adoption—even when it is loving and deeply well-intentioned—can leave a profound wound. When it occurs before a child can reason, at the level of core identity, adoption can be remembered as abandonment that

"is my fault."

After arriving in the United States, my experiences imbued the belief I was not enough. I was not worthy. No one would listen if I asked for help.

The caregivers of my adoption reinforced my experiences of abandonment and mistrust:

- Orphanage
- Severely emotionally damaged adopted family
- Mental institution

Adoption taught me to view my origins as shameful before I was old enough to understand them. School further compounded that harm, with bullying that was treated as something I was expected to endure.

I internalized messages from my adoptive family that I was less valuable because I was not Caucasian. I turned that harm inward and tried to distance myself from my own identity to avoid further pain.

I carried unresolved grief and a persistent fear of being abandoned.

No one taught me how to identify or express emotional pain, so I suppressed it. Emotional numbness felt safer than vulnerability. In

adulthood hypervigilance and an ongoing expectation of betrayal would drive my behavior.

I learned to manage everything on my own. Trust was impossible. My view of normal said “life is not safe.”

Adopted children need a support system outside of the home that:

- encourages exploration of their lived experiences
- will build trust before correcting behavior
- validates feelings before problem-solving
- gives the adopted child the experience of being heard without judgment
- has a trained care team that listens, monitors safety, and steps in when harm occurs
- continues through adulthood offering life-skills training

Proactive outside support will teach the adopted child that asking for help is protection—not betrayal or weakness.

An adopted child should not have to prove they are suffering.