



Adoption Competency Threads of Wisdom

November 10, 2023 - Core Issue# 1: Loss Begins the Lifelong Journey

- A 10-year-old had to complete a dot-to-dot in math class...the picture became the face of his perpetrator.
- Or, behaviors are not understood, and the kid is sent (multiple times) to North Star...
- unless working with trauma-informed folks, this could be even higher due to a lack of knowledge or awareness. The number would be unimaginable!
- If we don't work through them, they are just open wounds upon open wounds
- and that is often identified as ODD...should be removed from the DSM-5... healthy response in the circumstances.
- Enuresis and encopresis often have roots in loss/trauma
- those triggers reflect pain
- Kids' 'spider senses' are always active and frequently represent vicarious loss... "I've been here before...I am in danger."
- Behaviors based on vicarious loss are all too frequently seen as 'willful and volitional' behaviors
- Sadly, as a kid grows up, their belongings end up in a cigar box... everything but the trauma and anger falls away...
- Kids need to be able to love their parents, even if situations are terrible
- We need to know their trauma anniversary dates
- Pets are significant...unconditional love, often
- often essential to include foster/adopt parent in this if appropriate, so they too can walk that Loss Line
- I use dates associated with birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, memorable times of positivity, and so on.



- Holidays often involve alcohol consumption, and kids are abused/neglected.
- from Halloween past New Year is so difficult, as seen in my 36-year career for many
- ask and blend kids' traditions into a new family as appropriate and able...stockings? Open presents on Christmas Eve or Christmas? Special foods...
- School had a set schedule, and they knew what to expect, so yes, that ending can be terrifying!
- and we can't always fix it... acknowledgment is powerful
- So many kids don't ever feel like they have been seen and heard. Sitting in the acknowledgment of the pain can be such a new experience for them
- be authentic and soft when you work with these kiddos
- Loss piggybacks on earlier losses...
- Have child write loss(es)...don't have to share! and set it afire with purpose.
- traumatic loss, like we are talking about, can become an ugly heirloom that we hand on to our kids and them to theirs, etc.
- it allows space to validate their feelings--help them realize they aren't 'crazy/bad' or however they may have been labeled.
- Honoring their journey! Yes!
- "What we repress, we express."
- Behaviors with these kids are often attempts to hold on to control that they have never had...
- Kids need permission to love their parents, the real or the ideal...
- Sometimes, we can only plant seeds of health...
- Tear Soup <https://www.amazon.com/Tear-Soup-Recipe-Healing-After/dp/0961519762>