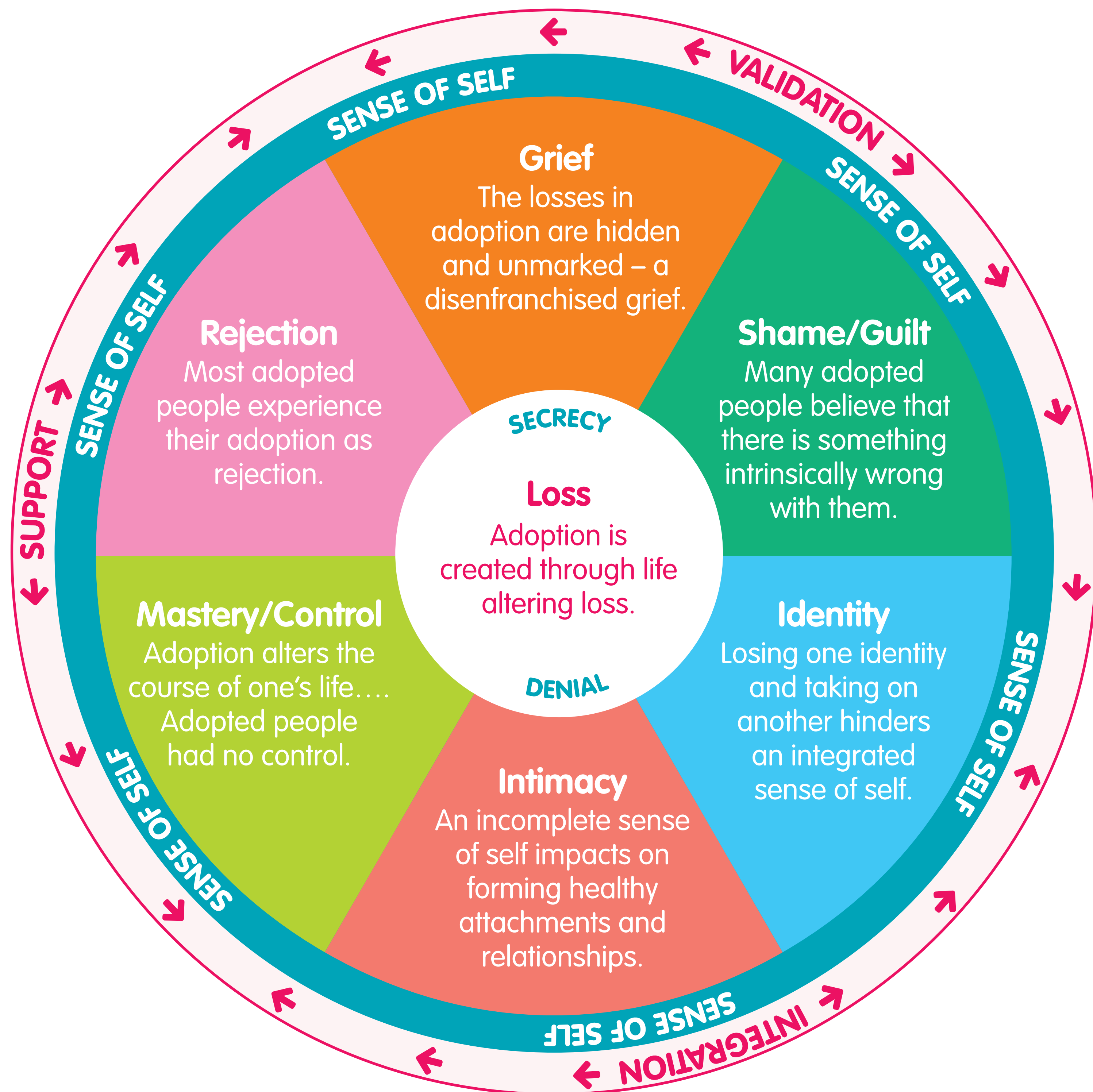


ADOPTION IS TRAUMA – The Ripple Effect

1 in 15 people are affected by adoption in Australia.¹

Adoption Wheel²



The First 1000 Days³

"Children exposed to adverse environments and experiences early are likely to continue to be exposed to such experiences, which has a cumulative effect. In this way, a poor start to life in the first 1000 days may be the start of a cascade of events that reinforce earlier neurological and biological adaptations."



Adoption:

- In-utero maternal stress
- Preverbal loss of mother and father

Adverse Childhood Experiences⁴

Adoption is an Adverse Childhood Experience:

1. Maternal/paternal separation at birth
2. Abandonment
3. Unrecognised and unaddressed emotional needs



10/100 people with 3 ACEs attempt suicide

Adoption Specific Research

Past Adoption Experiences 2012 – 823 adopted people in Australia⁵

The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)

- Adopted people showed much higher levels of psychological distress than the general population in 2001 National Health Survey.
- Close to one in five respondents (adopted persons) was likely to have had a severe mental disorder at the time of survey completion.

%	NHS male	NHS Female	Adopted persons
Likely to be well	85.6	79.6	54.1
Likely to have a moderate/severe mental disorder	5.8	9.9	28.2

Suicidal Behaviour in National and International adoptees – A Swedish Cohort Study⁶

- Large scale study (approx. 1.28 million people) using registers of people born 1963-1973 and followed up until 2002.
- Shows higher rates of suicide for adopted people but cannot predict who will attempt suicide.

CONTACT US

The Benevolent Society ☎ 1800 236 762

Post Adoption Resource Centre NSW

☎ 02 9504 6788 ✉ parc@benevolent.org.au

📱 /Post Adoption Resource Centre

Post Adoption Support Queensland

☎ 07 3170 4600 ✉ pasq@benevolent.org.au

📱 /Post Adoption Support Queensland

"I had to pretend I was something I wasn't."⁷

"I always finished a relationship first before I could be rejected."⁸

"Adoption robbed me of the knowledge of who I am."⁷

"There were times I wished I had been aborted rather than adopted."⁷

"I felt my life had been a lie."⁸

"I'm not sure I'm properly connected in any of my relationships."⁷

"I didn't really bond at all with my own children."⁷

"I often felt terror and feeling abandoned when left alone."⁷

"I always believed that maybe I would commit suicide one day."⁸

"The fear of not really belonging."⁷

What can you do?

Ask and Listen

- Are you adopted?
- What does your adoption mean for you?

Validate and connect

- Acknowledge lifelong impacts of adoption.
- Connect with peers and specialist services.

Support and respond

- Trauma informed.
- Holistic versus symptom management.

References

- ¹ Winkler, R., Brown, D. W., van Keppel, M., & Blanchard, A. (1988). Clinical practice in adoption (Psychology Practitioner Guideline Books). Oxford: Pergamon.
- ² Silverstein, D. N., & Kaplan, S. (1988). Lifelong issues in adoption. In L. Coleman, K. Tilbor, H. Hornby, & C. Boggis (Eds.), Working with older adoptees: A source book of innovative models (pp.45-53). Portland, ME: University of Southern Maine.
- ³ Adapted from <https://www.jigsawqueensland.com/lifelong-issues-in-adoption>
- ⁴ Moore, T.G., Areladib, N., Deery, A., Keyes, M., & West, S. (2017). The First Thousand Days: An Evidence Paper – Summary. Parkville, Victoria: Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute. Page 3.
- ⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acesstudy/index.html>
- ⁶ Kenny, P., Higgins, D., Soloff, C., & Sweid, R. (2012). Post adoption experiences: National Research Study on the Service Response to Past Adoption Practices (Research Report No. 21). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies. Page 106.
- ⁷ Von Borzyskowski, B., Hjerm, Lindblad & Vinnerljung (2006). Social Psychiatric Epidemiology Volume 41, Issue 2, pp 95-102.
- ⁸ Kenny, P., Higgins, D., Soloff, C., & Sweid, R. (2012). Past adoption experiences: National Research Study on the Service Response to Past Adoption Practices (Research Report No. 21). Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies. Chapter 7