

# adoptionuk

for every adoptive family

working with

**PAC-UK**



**THE AGENCY FOR  
ADOPTION &  
PERMANENCY  
SUPPORT**

Can be funded by the Adoption Support Fund in England

**Based on our renowned Parenting our Children programme**

Parenting Our Teens is based on our well-known Parenting our Children programme, which was developed for Adoption UK by Family Futures. It includes new elements specifically to address the issues faced by parents of teenagers who have experienced trauma in their early life.



# PARENTING OUR TEENS

## Therapeutic support for parents of adopted teenagers

### What is Parenting our Teens?

- Parenting our Teens is a unique four day training programme for parents of adopted teenagers delivered by PAC-UK in partnership with Adoption UK.
- Parenting our Teens is peer-led and will help parents and carers gain an understanding of their teenager's needs, learn strategies and skills to help teenager and parent, as well as access invaluable peer support.
- The programme is research-based and was developed in response to requests from adoption support teams for a teen-focused programme for their adoptive parents and carers.

### Who is the programme for?

- This programme is for parents of adopted teens, although it can be run for carers of teenagers in other forms of permanence.
- Those who have had children placed with them for 12 months or more and are experiencing challenges.
- Parents who have been assessed as needing therapeutic parenting support under the ASF (England only).

### How does it work?

- Up to 16 parents can attend.
- The programme can be run on weekdays or Saturdays – with a two week gap between each session.
- It is run by experienced and professional trainers, who are also adopters. In addition our trainers often have other relevant skills and qualifications, such as in family therapy, teaching and mental health in young people.
- A follow-on training day by attendees can form part of the package of support.

### What will parents achieve?

This programme will help parents to:

- Understand the emotional and practical impact of adolescence.
- Explore ways to adapt their parenting style and improve family relations.
- Cope with Child to Parent Violence, including using NVR techniques to de-escalate situations and increase parental presence.
- Feel empowered to work effectively with schools and teachers.
- Focus on self-care, build resilience and increase emotional regulation.
- Stay connected with their child.

### What do parents find most useful about Parenting our Teens – one day training?

*"Invaluable – there is a major gap for such courses for adopted teenagers and their parents..."*

*"After 14 years as an adoptive parent, this is the first time I have attended any course where somebody spoke from experience."*

# PARENTING OUR TEENS

## – four steps to empowering parents of teenagers

### The programme

**Day One** - This first day is designed to support and empower parents in understanding and addressing the emotional and practical impact of adolescence on families. It describes warning signs of issues and includes the following:

- The theories that explain adolescent behaviour, including identity issues.
- Mental health, emotional and behavioural issues that are frequently experienced by adopted teenagers.
- Strategies for staying connected with children during what can be turbulent times.
- How to reduce the risk of harmful behaviour and the impact of social media.

**Day Two** - The second day goes into more depth in terms of identity and raises awareness of the specific issues that teenagers face in their daily lives, providing parents with techniques and strategies to deal with these. Specifically this day will cover:

- How adopted teens may struggle at school.
- Ways in which parents can help their children with their education.
- The impact of executive functioning and sensory integration.
- The importance of relevant life story work for this age group and issues around contact with the birth family.

**Day Three** - We explore how parenting teenagers can impact parents. We consider what parents can do to build their own resilience and protect themselves in the face of extremes of behaviour displayed by adopted teens. This day will include:

- Understanding secondary trauma and blocked care: how parents can recognise these in themselves or their partner and what to do next.
- Exploring the impact of Child to Parent Violence: developing strategies for coping with aggressive behaviour including de-escalation and NVR skills.
- Awareness of mental health issues and how to help your teenager.
- How to communicate and stay connected with your child.

**Day Four** - The final day provides an overview of the previous three days as well as looking at:

- why adopted teens self-harm and how parents can help.
- parental self-care and staying safe.
- additional resources and places to go for support.

Time is set aside on this last day for parents to revisit previous days' material, to ask additional questions or to share reflections on recent experiences and additional concerns.

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### To find out about pricing or for further information

**Phone:** 07497 606 839

**Email:** [peertraining@pac-uk.org](mailto:peertraining@pac-uk.org)

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**Prof Helen Minnis, Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in the Institute of Health and Wellbeing at the University of Glasgow:**

*'The programme is very comprehensive and up to date, without "blinding with science". The programme is wonderfully inclusive and supportive, helping adoptive parents feel part of a strong community. The programme gently moves participants towards the more challenging aspects of parenting traumatised children and to broach the very real difficulties this can bring. This is a wonderful resource for new adoptive parents that is likely to help adoptive families flourish.'*



**Sir Richard Bowlby, lecturer, specialising in the work of his father, John Bowlby, the pioneer researcher on early attachment relationships:**

*'I welcome Adoption UK's launch of its parent support programme **Parenting our Children**. At its heart is an intimate knowledge of attachment theory together with the latest research in child development, neuropsychology and therapeutic intervention. I commend Adoption UK and their Family Futures colleagues who have produced this sensitive and intelligent programme for adopters and carers. I wish it every success.'*