



COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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QUICK LINKS

**Click & Connect -
31/8/22**

**Share & Connect
1/9/22**

**Lets Connect
5/9/22**



News - Aggression & Parental Stress

Did anyone register for the aggression webinar run by the Parental Stress Centre last week? A really worthwhile presentation with reminders about the importance of understanding the triggers for your child and informing those in your community, from teachers to other parents.

We were reminded of the many sensitivities from vocal patterns to facial expressions and noise and the challenge in activating the thinking brain when there is trauma. **It was interesting to learn that 95% of mind body behaviour is habitual or automated and helps explain why so little mind body behaviour is intentional/thinking brain in action.** Here are some tips:

- look for **triggers** to prevent crisis (physical (clothing, temperature, noise), emotional (tired, hours masking), environmental (stimulation, unpredictable), baseline (what does that look like for your child), tone and expression, behaviour, body language or activities)
- when they are **triggered**, **co-regulate** with your body, tone of voice and breath, redirect or distract and offer empathy and acknowledgement "It looks like you are frustrated by....."
- as they **escalate**, continue to coregulate and offer empathy, **avoid conflict** (don't make them wrong or solve their problem), prioritise calming their nervous system (breathing and mindfulness) and manage the environment
- at the **outburst** phase where the rational brain is offline (self harm, violence) help them **drain off their emotion**, saying very little ("I understand" "I know" "tell me more" "I am sorry")
- in the **recovery** phase where they have calmed down, help them **repair and reconnect** and learn (connecting feelings to behaviour and teaching coping skills)
- distinguish between **reactive aggression and proactive aggression** to determine an appropriate response (proactive aggression requires containment and negotiation with engagement and reasoning)

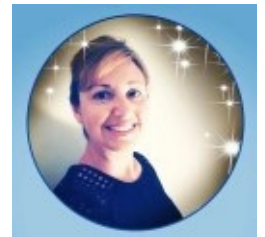
News - Autism Specific Parental Stress

The Parental Stress Centre offer an online autism specific program to support parents and carers in managing your mental health and applying strategies for meltdowns, anxiety, school refusal and aggression. 98% of parents join the program with NDIS funding. If not, PCA Families may be able to help with flexible funding. Find out more [here](#). Next program starts September 5th.



Youtube - Matrescence

Melissa Christian was an early childhood educator who became an intercountry adoptive parent of 3. Her journey to motherhood was long, 15 years in total. There was time for lots of learning from Therapeutic Parenting to Circle of Security. However, something wasn't quite right post adoption. A type of post adoption depression called matrescence. While she now had the perfect family, internally something was not quite right. Melissa explains her experience, the feelings and why it is so important to be able to talk about it. Motherhood involves a change in economics, emotions, biology, physicality, culture, social and spiritual life. One's self identity is forever changed. Add to that layers of perfectionism expected of adoptive parents and it's a formula for disaster. Melissa encourages all parents, particularly adoptive, to seek help when you need it and talk openly about the adjustments and challenges to get the help you need. Listen to the Youtube recording or read the transcript [here](#).



Events - Click & Connect



TOPIC: CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND THERAPEUTIC PARENTING - LINDA COOKE

DATE: Wednesday 31 August at midday with hosts Liz & Sonia

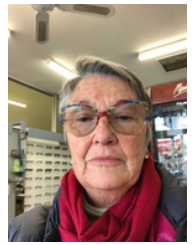
TOPIC: In this meeting we will review and discuss the Youtube Recording by Linda Cooke on Therapeutic Parenting. Therapeutic parenting is parenting that is loving and kind, where you are present with your child while they work through their emotions and challenges. It's parenting that builds the brain as you help your child understand what they are experiencing. It is healing and aids attachment so is perfect for parenting children from complex backgrounds (adoption, permanent care and kinship care). Linda Cooke, adoptive parent, shares how safety, nurture and structure must be present. Let's discuss how we might apply this learning in our everyday. Please join us for this discussion.

HOMEWORK: Please consider listening to or reading the transcript from the Youtube Recording by Linda Cooke titled "How does baking help parents to parent therapeutically with safety, structure and nurture?" Access the recordings and transcripts [here](#).

REGISTER: [here](#) via Zoom Link

"Improving the lived experience of young people"

News - Thanks



PCA Families wishes to thank one of our founding members, Chris Cook for all her work as part of Journal Club (Share and Connect) and PCA Families in general, as she now passes the baton to some new facilitators.

Chris has been an important backstop for Journal Club, supporting Mary and Cas as they researched and identified relevant material or followed up members and attendees.

Chris helped start Post Placement Support Services, now known as Permanent Care and Adoptive Families. Chris, Mary, Cas and many others came together, largely as parents of adoptees, to work out how to find services and provide support for carers of non biological children. They realised that while they were concerned about services for intercountry adoption, it also had a broader purpose in finding and providing services to support carers across the board.

In the early days workshops would run on Saturdays or on weeknights. Trips to the market would be made for bread and cheese. Cas would bake the cakes! Years later as funding was sourced and grants became a reality, the services and activities grew. Chris fondly remembers bringing in an American group of social workers who had experience in the area, who imparted their knowledge. But it didn't stop there. From the start the group knew it was important to have a structure and a strong but flexible constitution. Part of that constitution reinforced the idea that change in Board membership was important so that new ideas and content could be imparted. The constitution today still requires board members to retire from office at least every 3 years.

The existence of PCA Families and Journal Club is testament that one person's idea can be picked up by other people and can change the world. Chris will continue to volunteer her time on other projects focussed on building a sustainable environment for her grandchildren's future. Chris is a volunteer with a local Council conservation group planting trees on roads, reserves and waterways for revegetation. She steps aside from peer support to leave space for new people, thoughts and ideas to shape PCA Families peer support for the future.

We thank her for sharing her wisdom and experience and wish her all the very best for the future. She may pop up from time to time and attend a peer support meeting, as she has always testified that she gets more than she gives from those meetings!

News - Carer Assistance Program

The Carer Assistance program offers therapeutic support by an experienced counsellor, aimed at supporting and improving the mental health and wellbeing of parents and carers (including adoption). Up to 3 sessions will be available for matters on which you may require support. Some of the issues you might need additional support for include loss and grief following a family matter or breakdown, anxiety and depression, compassion or caring fatigue, blocked care, system 'trauma' following an incident, complexities in contact or similar. To access the counselling service, simply fill out the self-referral form available [here](#) or contact our helpline and we will direct you to counsellor Nic (available Tuesdays and Fridays).

Events - Share & Connect (Journal Club)



TOPIC: WORDS DRIVE CULTURE

DATE: Thursday 1 September

DETAILS: "Language matters. It's the raw material of story, it changes how we feel about ourselves and others and it's a portal to connection."

from 'Atlas of the Heart' by Brene Brown

From infancy we have been encouraged to use words to communicate our needs, feelings, desires and intentions. Virtually everything related to existence is connected to the power of words. The significance of words can seem paradoxical in an age where we can feel flooded by 'information overload', cynical of the disconnect between the rhetoric and reality within organizations and weary of social media, often fuelled by many superfluous, hollow words and technology that allows us to publicize reactive words instantly. Words can seem cheap. However words are powerful and they often drive the culture within our homes, communities and global village.

The words we use to describe ourselves and the words we hear spoken in reference to us, can form our personal story, our narrative and can then become our identity. Words matter! Conversations around adoption, permanent care, kinship care and foster care and the words we choose are important. The words and phrases our children hear, especially when we think they are not listening, are intrinsically linked to their sense of self and wellbeing.

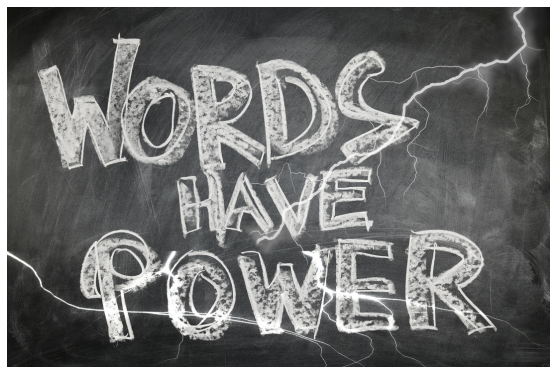
We will explore ways to reframe 'community speak', respond to invasive questions without communicating shame and how to have those more challenging 'word talks' with our precious children.

Jacinta Foster-Raimondo and her husband Mick have four young adult children, born to their family through the process of adoption. Two children were born in the Philippines and two were born in Australia.

Jacinta is a teacher, mental health and addiction clinician and now works as an Education and Trauma Consultant

HOMEWORK: Read this [article](#) "Words at Work" and this Amnesty International [Guide](#) "Inclusive Language and Events"

REGISTER: [here](#) via Zoom Link



"Delivering trauma informed services that empower"



Board - Nominations

PCA Families is currently looking for up to three new Board directors to serve a minimum of 3 years, up to a maximum of 9 years, on a Board made up of 7 to 9 directors, 5 with a close personal or family connection to adoption or permanent care and 2 without. More information about the skill set and requirements or how to nominate are available [here](#).

Nominations are due by 18 September 2022.



Events - Let's Connect - Bendigo

NEW START TIME - 11AM (PREVIOUSLY 10AM)

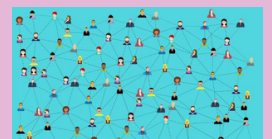
LOCATION: BENDIGO LIBRARY Activity Room 2, 251-259 Hargreaves St

DATE: Monday 5 September 11am - 2pm with hosts Trish & Liz.

Come along and meet Bruce our new program director who will also attend.

TOPIC: At our Let's Connect events its all about getting together to connect with others with lived experience face to face to share tips and advice and/or seek out some specialist advice from one of our PCA Families Advisors and the group. A PCA Families Advisor will be available for members to meet with individually and will run the group session. We will be open and flexible to discuss whatever you wish on the day or you can contact us ahead of time to let us know what you would like to know more about. Meeting requirements will be advised closer to the event.

Please register your interest in attending via trybooking [here](#).



DFFH Flexible Funding

If your child or young person is on a Permanent Care Order or you receive the DFFH Care Allowance and they have a Family Court Order or Adoption Order, they are entitled to DFFH Flexible Funding to meet the costs of goods and services they need not covered by the care allowance, or another funding source (eg Medicare, NDIS). Flexible funds can be used for therapeutic, educational or medical services, build skills interest or attachments, support birth family contact and cultural identity, respite, medication, vehicle modifications. For more details on what the funds can be used for see [here](#). Claims should be more than \$100 per invoice and generally paid by PCA Families directly to the supplier. To ensure funds are distributed fairly and equitably and are appropriate and safe for your child, we ask for supporting documentation that services are trauma informed and that both goods and services are recommended by a professional who knows your child or young person. Apply early as the need for supporting documentation can mean it takes 21 days to finalise your application.

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PCA Families, Level 4, 247-251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000
info@pcfamilies.org.au www.pcafamilies.org.au 03 9020 1833

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