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Birthmother perceptions of their own past open adoption placement and experience

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Birthmothers are those who have maintained their pregnancy and made an adoption plan. Birthmothers are also those who choose an adoption plan for their child or children before, after birth, or after a time of parenting. Those choosing open adoption have some degree of involvement in their birth child's life but no longer act as parent. This presentation discusses unintended pregnancy, the decision to make an adoption plan and the choice of open adoption from the birth mother's retrospective viewpoint. Two qualitative research study findings will be reported. Retrospective views of adolescent birthmothers versus those who were in their 20's at the time of placement suggest some differences in process and satisfaction with outcome. However both groups affirmed that this was one of the most difficult but best choices of their lives resulting in personally improved quality of life. Additional satisfaction came with knowing the wellbeing of birth children and having some degree of input into the developing child's life. Findings suggest that satisfaction with the decision to place versus parent increased over time. Implications for those in the adoption triad: Birth families, adoptive families and adoptees will be addressed in the presentation. Additionally, the topic of unintended pregnancy and adoption will be overviewed as a global matter. The process and degree of open adoption can be quite varied and multifactorial. Open adoption will be specifically defined and described. Adoption placement is a milestone in birthmother's lives. Even in the adoption triad, birthmother voices are rarely heard.

Biography

Lynn B Clutter, PhD, APRN, CNS, CNE is a nursing professor in the university BSN program where she enjoys teaching and mentoring students especially in perinatal and pediatric areas. She is a Lactation Consultant at Saint Francis Hospital. She serves as a Vice President of the Wong-Baker FACES Foundation Board, a leader in professional organizations, and has practiced as a Clinical Nurse Specialist.

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