

The Celia Center: Adopt Salon Support Group

AN EVALUATION REPORT

By

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Celia Center is committed to addressing the critical needs of the Foster Care / Adoption community by providing affordable mental health, education, and support services to all members of the bio-foster-adoption constellation, including professional social workers, nurses, case managers and therapists. The Center utilizes innovative programs, unique therapeutic interventions and national network of allies to create a safe and supportive environment to nurture and preserve strong, healthy families in any orientation or socio-economic status. One of the Center's many programs is the Support Program. Through this Support Program, regular, on-going support and information sharing group such as "Adopt Salon" and Teen Adopt Salon" are offered monthly free of charge for members of the Foster and Adoption Constellation and the general public.

This report covers the evaluation of the Adopt Salon Support Group from June 2013 to January 2014. This support group was held at Vista Del Mar and was presented by Jeanette Yoffe, the Executive Director of Celia Center. The goal of this these support groups is to provide a place for the Adoption and Foster Care community to come together to share stories, thoughts, feelings, ideas, receive psycho-education, process grief/loss, and build strong bonds/connections.

A total of 108 participants were surveyed including 50% adoptees or former foster youth, 35% adoptive parents, foster parents, or prospective adoptive parents, 6% biological parents, and 9% social workers or therapists (See Figure 1). The majority of the participants (63%) identified themselves as White, 14% Hispanic, 12% Bi-racial, 6% Asian, and 5% African American (See Figure 2). The age of the participants ranged from 13 to 67 ($M=44$, $STD=13$) and 79% were female.

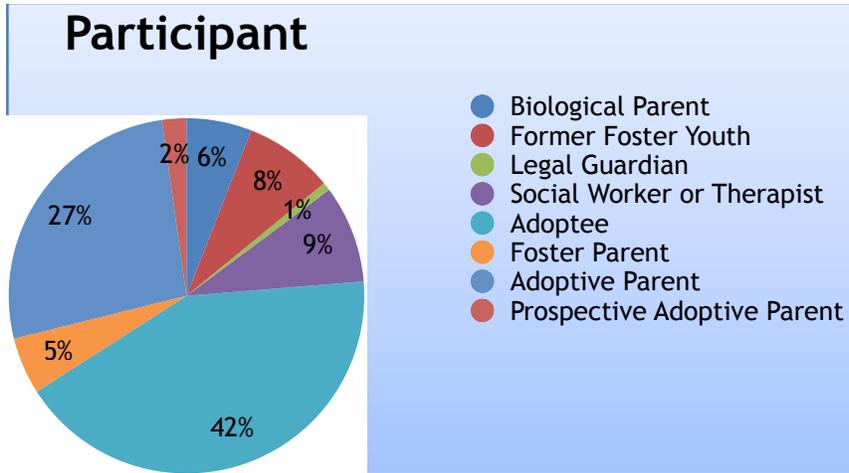


Figure 1. 50% were adoptees or former foster youth, 34% were adoptive parents, foster parents, or prospective adoptive parents, 9% were social workers or therapists, and 6% were biological parents.

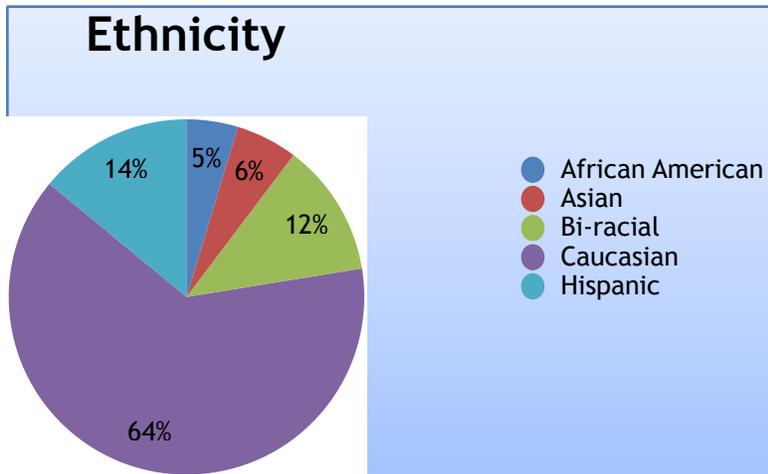


Figure 2. The majority of the participants (63%) identified themselves as Caucasian, 14% Hispanic, 12% bi-racial, 6% Asian, and 5% African American.

RESPONSES BY PARTICIPANTS ABOUT THE SUPPORT GROUP

Quantitative Data

First, participants were asked to “Please circle your agreement with each statement.” The responses were “Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree”, “Neither Agree Nor Disagree”, “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree”. As shown in Table 1:

- 93% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that
 - The support group increased their knowledge
- 94% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that
 - The support group provided a safe place for them to share stories, thoughts, feelings, and ideas
- 87% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that
 - The support group provided opportunities for them to process grief and loss
 - The support group provided them with opportunities to build strong bonds and connections with others
- 91% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that
 - They are able to understand themselves better because of this group
- 96% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that
 - They will recommend this group to others

Table 1
Responses by Participants about the Support Group (n=97)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Increased my knowledge.		1%	6%	37%	56%
Provided a safe place for me to share stories, thoughts, feelings, and ideas.	1%	1%	4%	22%	72%
Provided opportunities for me to process grief and loss.	1%		12%	32%	55%
Provided me with opportunities to build strong bonds and connections with others.	1%		5%	44%	50%

I am able to understand myself better because of this group.	1%		8%	39%	52%
I would recommend this group to others.	1%		3%	13%	83%

Next, participants were asked to “Please use the following scale to rate the *support group*.” The responses were “Very Low”, “Low”, “Average”, “High”, and “Very High”. As shown in Table 2:

- 97% of the participants rated high or very high for the usefulness of information in the support group
- 92% of the participants rated high or very high for the support group being planned and organized
- 93% of the participants rated high or very high on the relevance or applicability of the information in the support group
- 96% of the participants rated high or very high on the overall helpfulness of support group

Table 2

Responses by Participants about the Support Group (n=97)

	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High
Usefulness of information.			3%	33%	64%
Planned and organized.			8%	37%	55%
Relevance or applicability of the information.			7%	23%	70%
Overall helpfulness.			4%	25%	71%

Next, participants were asked “How much do you agree with each of the following statements before and after the support group?” The responses were “Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree”, “Neither Agree Nor Disagree”, “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree”.

The effect of the support group on the participants (n=99) was examined by measuring the changes in their perceived knowledge before and after the group. As shown in Table 3, all of the participants’ perceived understanding of adoption and foster care issues and knowledge increased after the group.

Table 3

Perceived Knowledge Change of Participants Before and After Group (n=99)

	<u>Pre-test</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
	M (SD)	M (SD)
I am aware of foster/adoption issues and can name at least three foster/adoption issues.	3.61 (1.24)	4.61 (.65)
I understand and can describe how separation impacts or relates to psychological and emotional well-being.	3.46 (1.3)	4.46 (.8)
I understand and can describe how grief and loss impacts or relates to psychological and emotional well-being.	3.48 (1.22)	4.4 (.87)
I understand and can describe how self-esteem impacts or relates to psychological and emotional well-being.	3.6 (1.21)	4.48 (.76)

Note. M=mean, SD=standard deviation

A t-test for paired samples was conducted to compare the perceived knowledge scores for participants before and after the group (see Table 4). The statistical test showed that all perceived knowledge increased after the group.

Table 4

Perceived Knowledge for Participants Before and After Group Using Paired Sample Test

	<u>Paired Difference</u>	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M (SD)			
I am aware of foster/adoption issues and can name at least three foster/adoption issues.	-1.000 (1.079)	-9.225	98	.000**
I understand and can describe how separation impacts or relates to psychological and emotional well-being.	-1.000 (1.169)	-.767	98	.000**
I understand and can describe how grief and loss impacts or relates to psychological and emotional well-being.	-.919 (1.122)	-.695	98	.000**
I understand and can describe how self-esteem impacts or relates to psychological and emotional well-being.	-.888 (1.139)	-.659	97	.000**

Note. M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, df=degrees of freedom, *p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01

These results suggest that the group provided by the Celia Center does have an effect on the participants' perceived understanding of foster care and adoption knowledge and issues. Specifically, the results suggest that when participants attend support groups at the Celia Center, their understanding of foster care and adoption knowledge and issues increase significantly.

Next, participants were asked to "Please complete this section if you are an adoptee/former foster youth." The responses were "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Neither Agree Nor Disagree", "Agree", and "Strongly Agree".

The effect of the support group on adoptees and former foster youth (n=55) was examined by measuring the changes in their perceived knowledge before and after the group. As shown in Table 5, their perceived understanding of themselves and other members of the adoption and foster care triad increased significantly after the group.

Table 5

Perceived Knowledge Change of Adoptee/Former Foster Youth Before and After Group (n=55)

	<u>Pre-test</u> M (SD)	<u>Post-test</u> M (SD)
I understand the importance and am able connect to my own grief.	3.16 (1.26)	4.42 (.88)
I am able to understand the perspective of foster and adoptive parents.	2.84 (1.07)	4.33 (.88)
I am able to understand the perspective of biological parents.	2.67 (1.22)	3.93 (1.27)

Note. M=mean, SD=standard deviation

A t-test for paired samples was conducted to compare the perceived knowledge scores for adoptees and former foster youth before and after the group (see Table 6). The statistical test showed that all perceived knowledge increased after the group.

Table 6

Perceived Knowledge for Adoptee/Former Foster Youth Before and After Group Using Paired Sample

	<u>Paired Difference</u> M (SD)	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
I understand the importance and am able connect to my own grief.	-1.255 (1.404)	-6.627	54	.000**

I am able to understand the perspective of foster and adoptive parents.	-1.491 (1.184)	-9.336	54	.000**
I am able to understand the perspective of biological parents.	-1.255 (1.294)	-7.189	54	.000**

Note. M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, df=degrees of freedom, *p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01

These results suggest that the group provided by the Celia Center does have an effect on the perceived knowledge of adoptees and former foster youth. Specifically, the results suggest that when adoptees and former foster youth attend support groups at the Celia Center, their understanding of foster care and adoption knowledge and issues increase significantly.

Next, participants were asked to “Please complete this section if you are a biological parent.” The responses were “Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree”, “Neither Agree Nor Disagree”, “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree”.

The effect of the support group on biological parents (n=10) was examined by measuring the changes in their perceived knowledge before and after the group. As shown in Table 5, their perceived understanding of themselves and other members of the adoption and foster care triad increased after the group.

Table 7

Perceived Knowledge Change of Biological Parents Before and After Group (n=10)

	<u>Pre-test</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
	M (SD)	M (SD)
I understand the importance and am able connect to my own grief.	4.10 (.738)	4.60 (.699)
I am able to understand the perspective of foster and adoptive parents.	3.30 (1.160)	4.00 (.667)
I am able to understand the perspective of adoptees.	3.40 (.966)	4.20 (.422)
I understand the importance and am able to connect to my child’s grief.	3.89 (1.269)	1.269 (.423)
I understand the importance and am able to address parenting issues relating to foster care and adoption.	3.20 (1.398)	4.00 (1.054)

Note. M=mean, SD=standard deviation

A t-test for paired samples was conducted to compare the perceived knowledge scores for biological parents before and after the group (see Table 7). The statistical test showed that all perceived knowledge increased after the group.

Table 8

Perceived Knowledge for Biological Parents Before and After the Group Using Paired Sample

	<u>Paired Difference</u> M (SD)	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
I understand the importance and am able connect to my own grief.	-.500 (.707)	-2.236	9	.052
I am able to understand the perspective of foster and adoptive parents.	-.700 (.675)	-3.280	9	.010*
I am able to understand the perspective of adoptees.	-.800 (.632)	-4.000	9	.003*
I understand the importance and am able to connect to my child's grief.	-.556 (1.014)	-1.644	9	.139
I understand the importance and am able to address parenting issues relating to foster care and adoption.	-.800 (.789)	-3.207	9	.011*

Note. M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, df=degrees of freedom, *p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01

These results suggest that the group provided by the Celia Center does have an effect on the perceived knowledge biological parents. Specifically, the results suggest that when biological parents attend support groups at the Celia Center, their understanding of foster care and adoption knowledge and issues increase significantly. However, the group does not seem to be able to address the issues of grief for biological parents because the change or difference before and after the group is not significant. It is also important to point out that the insignificant change or difference could be due to the small sample size.

Next, participants were asked to "Please complete this section if you are an adoptive, foster, or prospective adoptive parent." The responses were "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Neither Agree Nor Disagree", "Agree", and "Strongly Agree".

The effect of the support group on adoptive, foster, or prospective adoptive parent (n=32) was examined by measuring the changes in their perceived knowledge before and after the group. As shown in Table 5, their perceived understanding of themselves and other members of the adoption and foster care triad increased after the group.

Table 9

Perceived Knowledge Change of Prospective/Adoptive/Foster Parent Before and After Group (n=32)

	<u>Pre-test</u> M (SD)	<u>Post-test</u> M (SD)
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I understand the importance and am able connect to my child's grief.	2.97 (1.303)	4.00 (1.211)
I understand the importance and am able connect to my own grief.	3.53 (1.295)	4.06 (1.162)
I understand the importance and am able to address parenting issues relating to foster care and adoption.	3.41 (1.214)	4.06 (1.162)
I am able to understand the perspective of adoptees.	2.78 (1.237)	3.88 (1.185)
I am able to understand the perspective of biological parents.	2.84 (1.370)	3.50 (1.437)

Note. M=mean, SD=standard deviation

A t-test for paired samples was conducted to compare the perceived knowledge scores for adoptive, foster or prospective adoptive parents before and after the group (see Table 9). The statistical test showed that all perceived knowledge increased after the group.

Table 10

Perceived Knowledge for Prospective, Adoptive, and Foster Parents Using Paired Sample

	<u>Paired Difference</u> M (SD)	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
I understand the importance and am able connect to my child's grief.	-1.032 (1.251)	-4.593	30	.000**

I understand the importance and am able connect to my own grief.	-.531 (.675)	-2.790	31	.009**
I understand the importance and am able to address parenting issues relating to foster care and adoption.	-.656 (1.035)	-3.586	31	.001**
I am able to understand the perspective of adoptees.	-1.094 (1.489)	-4.156	31	.000**
I am able to understand the perspective of biological parents.	-.656 (1.208)	-1.092	31	.004**

Note. M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, df=degrees of freedom, *p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01

These results suggest that the group provided by the Celia Center does have an effect on the perceived knowledge of adoptive, foster, or prospective adoptive parents. Specifically, the results suggest that when adoptive, foster, or prospective adoptive parents attend support groups at the Celia Center, their understanding of foster care and adoption knowledge and issues increase significantly.

Next, participants were asked to “Please complete this section if you are a Social Worker or Therapist.” The responses were “Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree”, “Neither Agree Nor Disagree”, “Agree”, and “Strongly Agree”.

The effect of the support group on Social Workers and Therapists (n=8) was examined by measuring the changes in their perceived knowledge before and after the group. As shown in Table 5, their perceived understanding of themselves and other members of the adoption and foster care triad increased after the group.

Table 11

Perceived Knowledge Change of Social Workers or Therapists Before and After Group (n=8)

	<u>Pre-test</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
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	M (SD)	M (SD)
I understand the importance and am able connect to my client's grief.	4.00 (.926)	4.50 (.535)
I understand the importance and am able address parenting issues relating to foster care and adoption with my client.	3.75 (1.035)	4.50 (.535)
I am able to understand the perspective of foster and adoptive parents.	3.71 (1.113)	4.29 (.756)
I am able to understand the perspective of adoptees.	3.25 (1.389)	3.75 (1.035)
I am able to understand the perspective of biological parents.	2.88 (1.642)	3.50 (1.604)

Note. M=mean, SD=standard deviation

A t-test for paired samples was conducted to compare the perceived knowledge scores for adoptive, foster or prospective adoptive parents before and after the group (see Table 9). The statistical test showed that all perceived knowledge increased after the group.

Table 12

Perceived Knowledge of Social Workers or Therapists Before and After the Group Using Paired Sample

	<u>Paired Difference</u> M (SD)	T	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
I understand the importance and am able connect to my client's grief.	-5.00 (.756)	-1.871	7	.104
I understand the importance and am able address parenting issues relating to foster care and adoption with my client.	-.750 (.707)	-3.000	7	.020*
I am able to understand the perspective of foster and adoptive parents.	-.571 (.787)	-1.922	6	.103
I am able to understand the perspective of adoptees.	-.500 (.756)	-1.871	7	.104
I am able to understand the perspective of biological parents.	-.625 (.916)	-1.930	7	.095

Note. M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, df=degrees of freedom, *p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01

These results suggest that the group provided by the Celia Center does not seem to have an effect on the perceived knowledge of social workers or therapists, except for the social worker's or therapist's understanding and ability to address parenting issues relating to foster

care and adoption. Specifically, the results suggest that when adoptive social workers or therapists attend support groups at the Celia Center, their understanding of importance and ability to address parenting issues relating to foster care and adoption increase significantly.

EVALUATION

Qualitative Data

Next, participants were asked to three open-ended questions:

- How will you use the information presented in this support group?
- What was the best part of this support group?
- How has this group helped you?
- What suggestions do you have to improve this support group?

Table 13

Responses by Participants about How the Information or Idea Will be Used (n=32)

How will you use the information presented in this support group?	# Respondents	% Respondents
Develop better relationship and intimacy with family	3	9
Gaining priceless and useful information regarding the emotional well-being of the adoption and foster care community	2	6
Understand, relate, and talk to other members of the triad	6	19
Understand and process loss for all members of the triad	3	9
Understand, express, and process own feelings and others' feelings	2	6
Approach upcoming reunion or reconnect with birth family	3	9
Become a better parent	3	9
Apply learned information to daily life	4	13
Grow personally and professionally	2	6
Be more supportive and have compassion for my child	2	6
Share knowledge to general public	1	3
Understanding foster care system better	1	3

Table 14

Responses by Participants about the Best Part of this Group (n=68)

What was the Best Part of This Support Group?	# Respondents	% Respondents
Feeling safe and comfortable to share personal experiences or express feelings without feeling judged	15	22
Feeling understood, supported and connected with others in the group	15	22
Meeting other people with similar experiences	9	13
Sharing stories and useful information	20	29
Gaining insight on different perspectives	9	13

Table 15

Responses by Participants about How Has the Group Helped (n=37)

What was the Best Part of This Support Group?	# Respondents	% Respondents
Helped gain better understanding of self and the adoption triad	15	41
Helped increase awareness	2	5
Helped with healing	3	8
Helped participants open up more	6	16
Helped participants feel belong and know that they are not alone	5	14
Helped participants be a better parent	6	16

Table 16

Suggestions Provided by Participants to Improve the Group (n=20)

What Suggestions do you Have to Improve This Support Group?	# Respondents	% Respondents
More frequent	8	40
Longer hours	4	20
Have sub-groups of different triad	1	5
Offer the group to more areas	2	10

More participants	5	25
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Table 17

Additional Comments for the Group (n=16)

What Additional Comments Do you Have for the Group?	# Respondents	% Respondents
Keep up the good work	2	13
Thank you so much	3	19
It's perfect	3	19
Excellent	4	25
Very helpful	2	13
It's great	2	13