

HIGHLIGHTING THEMES FOR CHILDREN with SIGNIFICANT IDENTITY ISSUES

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FAMILY/CARER RELATIONSHIPS: IMPORTANT VALUES TO PROMOTE

- truth and honesty, care and love
- acceptance of person/child including their entire history
- That adults can have and deal with their own feelings well, and that having many and sometimes conflicting feelings is not only OK but understandable

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PRIVILEGING ASPECTS OF IDENTITY

- holding a space for the reality of another family, other people and possible connections
- Keeping space for places and people lost, unknown people [such as donors] and pre-existing relationships... a difficult balance
- honouring heritage, language & culture
- having access to information and documents that reflect reality

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Even when the story is difficult or uncomfortable [for whom?]

- It is not always something to celebrate [such as maltreatment stories, incest babies, intrafamilial murder]
- Abandonment
- Stories of war, displacement, multiple losses and becoming a refugee

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES NEED

Access to informed psychological support and therapeutic intervention without the need for a diagnosis or psychological problem:

for the family [and might involve more than two generations]

for parents/carers [and if appropriate school and residential care staff]

for children, young people and when adult – as issues may resurface in a different form

- Resources should be available so that the process can start when children are very young and adults around them can be proactive

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SERVICES SHOULD

- Be easily available and developmentally appropriate
- Be non-stigmatising
- Enable and support adults to gradually unfold the story to minimise sense of betrayal/lies; avoid late, 'surprise' revelations which can fracture identity and have the potential to create ruptures in significant relationships
- Have a range of interventions so that young people can feel safe enough to explore meanings and ask questions within the family and/or individually, and where varied and changing feelings are acknowledged
- Include groups in which they do not feel alone and come to know 'other people like me' with 'similar but different stories' –who also have to need to terms with facts and feelings about their history/conception and incorporate these into developing identity

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