

# **30 Ways to Support Adoptees' Racial/ Ethnic Identity Development**

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*Published Nov 2022*

*In an online survey I asked transracially adoptive parents to share what has been working for their adoptee as they pursue ethnic racial identity development together, I've taken time to organize and paraphrase their responses here:*

1. Donate money to local non-profits (but don't just throw money at it).
2. Art/sculptures in the home, representations of your child's culture visible in the home including art of sorts, photos, books, etc.
3. Proactive discussions / talking about it.
4. Listening to adoptees / adoptee voices / test your biases.
5. Enroll adoptee in a dual language program so that they could have the ability to speak their birth language and/or the language of their family, supports their ethnic/racial identity formation.
6. Consider ways to preserve their name, maybe two last names, they can choose later to keep or drop, consistent with research from adopted territory [by Eleana Kim] about how our names often don't match our face.
7. Read through cookbooks, pick recipes together, cuisine representative of their culture.
8. Take class on how to care for skin and hair.
9. Read books like Adoption is Both, being adopted [Amy Wilkerson].
10. Be ok with not having all the answers, model it, no need to pretend.
11. Speak native language at home.
12. Prioritize who you spend time with.
13. Include their birth culture in everyday life.

14. Include people who look like them embedded/ingrained in every part of their lives (for those who watch *This is Us*, the scene where Randall and Kevin are at the pool and their friends ask Randall to rap, Kevin is “good” at it but Randall struggles, he experiences a clear yet unnamable emotional reaction).
15. Sacrifice, but also don’t play martyr or savior.
16. Stand up for them, advocate, with others.
17. Set boundaries with people and places who are not safe or supportive, who aren’t on board.
18. Connect them with mentors/counselors that don’t look like the adoptive parents (thinking about racial and ethnic identity, e.g., “[40 ways to support bi-culturalism](#)”), racial mirrors.
19. Go to barbershops often and let the haircut take as long as it takes, as long as the conversation, supporting care of essential needs of skin/hair.
20. Be willing to be uncomfortable in situations when it helps them feel seen (ps adoption isn’t for your comfort).
21. Make new friends.
22. Learn about their culture, the history, the issues and causes, the joys and the lament, the activism and the everyday, activities/discussion of culture/race/ethnic history, traditions, heritage, & celebration of national holidays.
23. Community with persons of your child’s race/ethnicity.
24. Openly advocating for reform in laws, thinking, education as it relates to your TRA.
25. Travel to country of their origin if possible.
26. Let your children see you (as parents) consistently learning, educating yourselves to do better and be better for them.
27. Apologize and take responsibility, be accountable to make things right with your child as you learn more.
28. As in the May Angelou quote from class last week (this respondent is referring to a parent who shared a quote during [Cam’s virtual workshop for adoptive parents](#)) “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”
29. Additional resources [from childwelfare.gov](#) (#30... please add yours here\_\_\_\_\_!)

## BIO

Cam graduated from University of Madison-Wisconsin with a BS in Psychology. He then served as the adoptee summer camp director for Holt International, before earning his Master's in Counseling Psychology. After earning his clinical licensure, he self published his memoir [This is Why I Was Adopted](#) as an interactive workbook for adoptees and families to explore grief, loss, restoration and hope. He earned his [Permanency & Adoption Competency Certificate](#) through the [Center for Adoption Support and Education](#), and is partnered as a vetted clinician both with [MNAadopt](#) and the post-masters directory curated by [Training for Adoption Competency](#). Cam is trained in [biblical counseling](#), certified in [non-violent crisis intervention](#) and is a member of the [American Psychological Association's Minority Fellowship Program](#).

Cam has written adoption-informed essays for [Christianity Today](#), [National Council for Adoption](#), [University Minnesota School of Social Work](#) (p. 19), and [Center for Adoption Support and Education](#). He has also been interviewed on [podcasts/radio/video shows](#) such as Empowered to Connect, The Cha Show, Let's Grab Coffee with University of Memphis professor SunAh Marie (WYXR 91.7), The Archibald Project, The Forgotten Initiative, and Asians for Mental Health with Dr. Jenny Wang ([access all interviews here](#)).

In addition to appearing on panels for [Angela Tucker \(This Adopted Life\)](#), Holt International, Catholic Charities, [Be The Bridge](#), [I Am Adoptee](#), [Expert Voices in Adoption Conference](#), and [Camp Choson](#), he has also taught and facilitated workshops and video trainings for churches, universities, and child-welfare organizations around the nation, including Children's Bureau, Replanted Ministries, Southeast Christian Church, Foster Love Project, Catalyst Foundation, United for Adoption, Korean American Adoptive Family Network, The Minnesota Society for Clinical Social Work, and Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System ([view full list and access presentations here](#)).

## WHERE YOU'VE SEEN CAM



Cam's personal experience as an international adoptee from Korea has informed and inspired his professional path, through which he formed his own private practice Therapy Redeemed, in 2018, to raise awareness and respond to the mental health needs of adoptees and their families wherever they may be in their own adoption journey.

Therapy Redeemed's mental health and education services are accessible 100% online and uniquely tailored for individuals and families on the adoption and permanency spectrum. Cam produces and provides all of his services from Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he lives with his wife and family.

You can follow Cam on instagram @therapyredeemed - view his show Office Hour with Your Therapist on YouTube - and access his adoption-informed mental health content/resources at the websites listed below.

## Services

### [Letters of Recommendation](#)

[Workplace Open Forums](#) are tailor made for your team to process themes and gain tools related to AAPI and BIPOC experiences.

### [Masterclass courses for adoptees and parents](#)

Register for the next monthly parent training  
[Online Adoptive Parent Workshop](#)

### [Join the next online Teen Adoptee Group](#)

### [Hire Cam for your next event as your keynote speaker and trainer](#)

For counseling and consultation,  
visit <https://therapyredeemed.com/wordpress>

Free mental health training videos at  
[Office Hour with Your Therapist](#)

### [Free General Resources & Discussion Guides](#)

[Visit the Shop for full resource catalog](#)  
including the workbook for adoptees.



For questions, contact Cam  
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