

20 Responses to #adoptionislove

Please don't call adoption love and then criticize adoptees who reach out for it. Here are 20 responses to practice instead:

*By adoptee and licensed clinical counselor Cam Lee Small
Published February 2023*

The #adoptionislove paradigm can feel confusing, especially later on in life when the adoptee begins to ask for love in ways that feel counter to the indoctrination we receive through (for example, “what it feels like to adopt a teen”) commercials.

Love isn't as commercial in real life. Especially for adoptees.

Instead, it might compel you to:

1. Give access to birth records
2. Provide or assist in acquisition of medical information
3. Acknowledge trauma, loss, and other systemic realities
4. Reflect frequently on your own personal biases
5. Protect us from racist family members
6. Commit to growth as a lifelong learner of adoption-related truths
7. Attend to and explore your emotional/interpersonal patterns
8. Support connections with birth family
9. Endorse birth country travel
10. Celebrate and stand up for racial-ethnic flourishing
11. Respect name changes (birth name reclamation or choosing new ones)
12. Participate in anti-racism efforts
13. Process your experiences in formal therapy settings
14. Cooperate with requests to annul the adoption

15. Learn about and engage in adoptee-centered activism (before and even after an adoption annulment/emancipation)
16. Preserve privacy by refraining from gossip
17. Honor boundaries
18. Look past “behaviors” and see the person beneath it
19. Defend adoptee rights when we're not in the room
20. Invite more of us into the room

Institutionalized adoption programs “warn” adoptive parents about these dynamics (and more), when what we really need is for these points to be recognized as normative developmental tasks inherent to a person's journey through (non) permanency and adoption.

Without stigma. Without pride. With patience. With kindness.

In other words, it's normal for an adoptee to feel loved through anti-commercial means. My sense is that if you're not willing to conform to the patterns of this world, you might be in a better position to practice the love that comes from outside of it; something we could all benefit from together. Would it be unlovable to ask for that?

Cam Lee Small, MS, LPCC is an international adoptee from Korea, an experience that informs and inspires his current professional work as an author and licensed professional clinical counselor. 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 adoption journey. Cam's vision for adoptee-centered advocacy is evident through his 1:1 counseling services, live workshops and support groups, Masterclass trainings, and his active content creation/collaboration in and through various media platforms. His work has been featured in Christianity Today, National Council for Adoption, University Minnesota School of Social Work, and Center for Adoption Support and Education. He is currently working on a manuscript for a book to be released through InterVarsity Press to address the intersection of adoption, mental health, and social justice. Cam brings value and much needed perspective to the adoption community, personally and professionally.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (TAP IMAGES TO ACCESS ADDITIONAL MATERIALS)

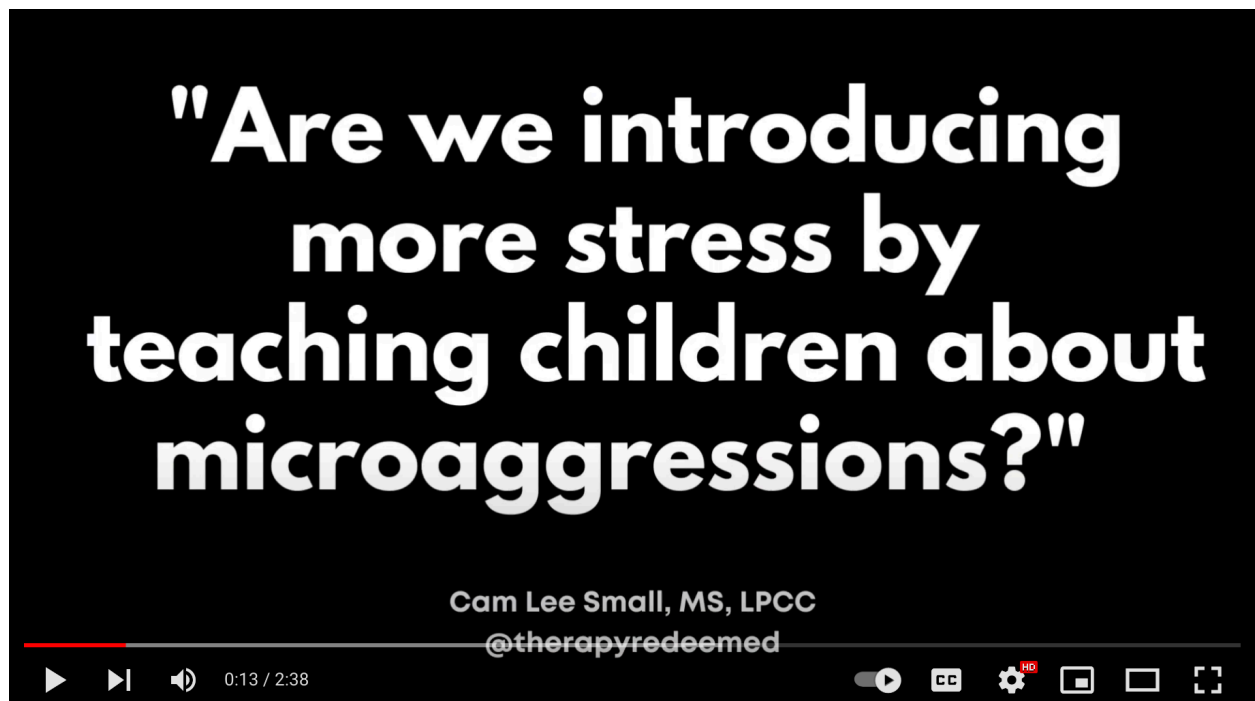
1. [Cam Addresses Adoption Trauma with CBS News](#)
2. [10 Facts about Adoptees](#)
3. [Currently accepting speaking requests for Summer and Fall 2023](#)
4. [An Ethos for Adoptee Speakers](#)
5. [Subscribe to Monthly Resource Package for important updates and exclusive support options](#)
6. [Access the January 2023 Resource Package](#)
7. ["Should we Teach Children About Microaggressions?"](#)





Click image to view topics and schedule

Currently Booking for Summer/Fall 2023
[Schedule Your Event Directly with Cam 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
at therapyredeemed@gmail.com
<https://therapyredeemed.wordpress.com>
Connect on IG: @therapyredeemed