

Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

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March & April 2021



Join AFFM's Virtual 24th Annual Spring Conference:

"Building Empathy, Compassion, and Trust"

Friday April 16th and Saturday April 17th

Registration Here: <https://affmconference.nowvirtual.live/register>

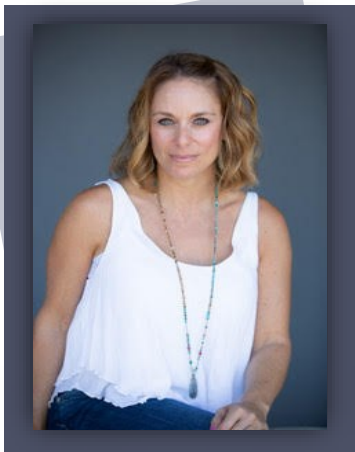
Joree Rose, MA, LMFT Keynote Friday April 16th

Mindfulness & Empathy; How They are Related, and Why it Matters

We all want to feel seen, heard and validated, and when we feel that, we feel stronger to be ourselves, experience resiliency and overcome challenges. When we don't feel seen, heard or validated, it becomes easier to be disconnected from others, feeling as if no one "gets us" making it harder to experience trust in relationships. At the root of a mindfulness practice is the ability to be aware and acknowledge what is arising in the present moment - your thoughts, emotions, sensations in your body, as well as what is occurring in the environment around you. This will help you to allow whatever it is you are experiencing with greater acceptance and compassion, rather than with judgment or resistance. This self-awareness makes it more possible to attune to the experiences of others, which is the core of empathy. When you can practice the foundational tools of mindfulness you'll increase your ability to not only role model this self-awareness and self-acceptance to others, but to actually respond to those around you with a greater level of validation, strengthening your connections. In this workshop, you'll be guided to through a deeper understanding, as well as the practical application of mindfulness, along with tangible ways to deepen your empathic skills to cultivate stronger relationships.

Mindful Parenting - How to Positively Shift the Culture in Your Home for You and Your Family

Mindful parenting is a twofold practice; it's cultivating a mindfulness practice for yourself, so you can be more present, less reactive and more compassionate to others, and then being able to role model these tools to those you love. Being a parent is very difficult and we all can easily get stuck in patterns or cycles of reactivity due to relational challenges, triggers, extraneous circumstances, behavior issues, traumas and more! Practicing mindfulness will not necessarily remove your difficulties, though it will help you to respond, rather than react to them, in a way that can actually deepen the relationship between parent and child. When you can learn to increase your awareness of the areas in which you most get stuck, as well as have the ability to offer yourself compassion and patience during a difficult moment, you are more able to shift towards a more calm and present response to your kids, shifting the culture in your home to be more accepting and compassionate, and less judgmental and reactive. In this workshop you will be guided in practical tools of mindfulness, how to role model and teach these tools to your kids, as well as effective parenting tactics for discipline and behavior, so your home can feel more peaceful, calm and connected.



Joree Rose, MA, LMFT, is a licensed marriage and family therapist, mindfulness and meditation teacher, coach, author, speaker, and she also leads mindfulness retreats around the world. Joree has helped thousands of people to live happier and more fulfilling lives through living with greater awareness and compassion, allowing them to decrease their stress, anxiety and shed unhealthy habits, patterns and mindsets. Joree is host of the podcast 'Journey Forward® with Joree Rose' and has authored the newly released [A Year of Gratitude, Daily Moments of Reflection, Grace and Thanks](#) as well as 2 mindfulness books, [Squirmy Learns to be Mindful](#) and [Mindfulness, It's Elementary](#). Joree has been featured in prominent media outlets such as [Oprahmag.com](#), [NBCnews.com](#), [Business Insider](#), [KTLA News](#), and so many more!

Marcus Stallworth, LMSW Keynote Saturday April 17th



The 4 A's Approach to Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In this discussion, we will examine the beauty of diversity, the need for equity, and the importance of inclusion. We will focus on the 4 A's approach: Awareness, Acknowledgement, Action, and Accountability. Participants will be asked to reflect, re-evaluate, and reimagine ways they can enhance services for the children and families they support. This virtual presentation is intended for audience participation and peer interaction.

Marcus Stallworth, LMSW, has spearheaded several initiatives to promote the engagement of Fathers, the prevention of abuse and neglect, and the dangers of Social Media. He has direct experience educating and supporting Human Trafficking and Sexually Exploited victims, training staff on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and advocating for youth in Foster Care. Marcus is the Director of Training and Implementation at the Child Welfare League of America, and is also co-owner of Welcome 2 Reality, LLC which focuses on providing media literacy and education for students and parents regarding media literacy and technology.

Friday April 16th Workshops

Beauty in the Breakdown: Owning Your Needs to Tune in to Your Teen

Presented By: YLAT

This workshop will invite participants to look inwards to examine the way they show up on both their best, and most challenging days. Honoring each person's unique experiences and perspective, attendees will walk away with tools to create deeper and more empathic connections with youth, while also developing practices of self-reflection and awareness to become empathetic communicators in challenging circumstances. A panel of experts will incorporate key pieces of information around adolescent brain development and typical teenage behaviors that may cause conflict in relationships. Hear from young people about the positive adult relationships that have fostered clear and open communication, and from professional staff regarding engagement strategies. This workshop will help participants establish reasonable expectations.

Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities

Presented By: Atlee Reilly, Esq.

This workshop will provide participants with an overview of the rights of students with disabilities in schools. Specific topics will be discussed in more detail, including: addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 educational disruptions; exclusionary discipline; restraint and seclusion, and transition. Questions and discussion will be encouraged.

Restorative Practices- Restoring Relationships With Others

Presented By: Corrie Hunkler, LSW

How do we restore our relationships with each other? Restorative practices models can be effective and appropriate responses to unacceptable or unexpected behavior by building empathy and maintaining relationships. Importantly, restorative practices are an equally useful approach in advance of potential conflicts or unacceptable behaviors. This workshop will explore the need to listen, reflect, be curious and respond to each other and young people.

Saturday April 17th Workshops

Developing Empathy with the Team and Other Forms of Communication

Presented By: Bette Hoxie

Derived from Developing Empathy with Grammy, Bette will present a guided imagery to assist and enhance participant's involvement in the presentation. Bette will help participants realize each person in their lives can bring something positive to the table.

Working with and Valuing Birth Family Connections

Presented By: Barbara Ford

This workshop has an emphasis on finding commonalities that will encourage care providers to be strength-based in their approach. This workshop will also provide the opportunity to explore many options for being creative and positive about your children 's contact and visitation and how all resource families can be a mentor and an important part in the success of these relationships.

Supporting Children's Roots: Simple Questions, Complicated Answers

Presented By: Kim Stevens

Whether adopted at birth or at an older age, whether adopted internationally or domestically, our children have a history that precedes our welcoming them in our family. In some form or another, at some time, our children will have questions regarding their past and the circumstances of their adoption. How do we handle these questions? What to respond? What if we don't have the answers? This session will discuss the various thoughts and questions adopted children may have and how to address them as adoptive parents along with supports available to adoptive parents.

Friendly Reminder

If you are a licensed home and you're planning to renew, please remember to complete training hours prior to the expiration date of your license.

Are you looking for training? You can access Foster Parent College FREE from the comfort of your home and stay caught up on your training on your own time! Are you looking for a specific topic you would like to learn more about? Check out Foster Parent Colleges' extensive list of classes!

Don't wait until it's time to renew your license! Start your Training NOW! <https://www.fosterparentcollege.com/info/affiliate-list.jsp> Click on Maine and choose AFFM as your affiliate site.

If you have any questions, please reach out to Hether Anderson: hether@affm.net or Monica Bushey: monica@affm.net

AFFM's Lending Library is another way to receive training hours! Check out what's available in the library here: <https://affm.net/services/lending-library/>



Thank You!



Thank you to the Aroostook Partners in the Arts (APA) for collaborating with AFFM's Sarah Hatt and providing art supplies to 50 children in care. The Crayons and Care Project aims to give all 250 children who are in foster care in Aroostook County age-appropriate art supplies, including crayons, markers, coloring books and sketchbooks. Thank you for your generous contribution!

Thank you to GFWC Rotonda West Woman's Club as well as Marilyn Hoxie for making and donating hats and mittens to AFFM!

Thank you Alice Vanadestine for your handmade handbags and the new socks and items for children in care!



Adoption Announcements!



Our adoption of Logan and Isabella Gustafson was legalized on October 23, 2020.

We are delighted and blessed!

Sheila & Craig Gustafson

Kai has always been our baby but now we share the same last name!

Kai's adoption was legalized on December 9, 2020

the most perfect Christmas present!

Katie Moran



Adoption Announcements Continued!



On November 20, 2020 Debra Wood was granted permanent guardianship of 8 year old Robert Flannery. Robert is her grandson and has resided with Deb for 2 years now. Rob excels in school, attends cub scouts, and enjoys music and French class.

To assist Robert to feel he has some choice and control over his own life, Debra and Robert celebrated a private adoption where Rob and Deb adopted each other. They celebrated with signing of a certificate, cake and games that involved an afternoon of fun for all!



On November 6, 2020, Ari and Maya legally joined the Bromski family!



We are so blessed to have this little angel join our forever family! Congratulations to the Lembarra family!



Have you recently legalized an adoption? Would you like to share the exciting news with others? AFFM would love to create an adoption announcement in the Family Ties newsletter. Send a write up and photo (if you wish) to meagan@affm.net.

Did you know that after you've adopted you are still able to access AFFM's support services? Call AFFM today to learn about post adoption support!

Parents as Partners

Parents as Partners is a peer support program for parents who are experiencing high levels of stress, including any stage of involvement with child protective services. We match parents with trained peers who have experienced similar family stressors and service systems. Parents as Partners is a program of The Opportunity Alliance and serves parents of York and Cumberland County.

For more information, please contact, Kelly Dell'Aquila, Parents as Partners Program Coordinator at 207-523-5023/207-712-5962 or kelly.dellaquila@opportunityalliance.org. You can also learn more about Parents as Partners on The Opportunity Alliance website: <https://www.opportunityalliance.org/parents-as-partners>.

Helpful Tips for Resource Parents by Parents

- Be open and receptive with parents, people can change.
- Regular parent visits with their children are essential for families.
- Acknowledge, with compassion, that this process can be difficult.
- As soon as possible, have open communication with parents.
 - ⇒ Create an email account to use with parents.
 - ⇒ Send updates so parents can be involved in their children's activities. For example, schoolwork, art, or schedule.
- You may experience behaviors with the children that you are unsure of how to manage.
 - ⇒ Children's behavior is often a normal reaction to the trauma of being separated from parents.
 - ⇒ Invite parents to share what helps soothe children when upset. They know their children best.
- Ask parents questions of curiosity about their children's likes, interests etc.
- Include parents in decisions about their children.
- Parents will do better when they have supportive resource parents.



Kinship



Corner

Attention Kinship Families!

AFFM has partnered with the University of Maine to help survey families who receive support from AFFM. Please keep an eye out for survey mailings (by mail or e-mail) from the University. Surveys will arrive about 3 months after your first call or service from AFFM. This will help AFFM document the impact of our work with families and identify areas for improvement. Thank you for helping AFFM with this important effort!



C.A.R.E.S.

Connect . Advice. Resources. Education. Support

AFFM C.A.R.E.S. Meetings Offered Online During the Months of March & April!

(C.A.R.E.S. Meetings will resume normal meeting dates and times after the social distancing order has been lifted.)

AFFM is aware if you receive the printed version of the newsletter some dates listed below may have passed. Please know the groups will continue to meet on a rotating schedule. Please email sheila@affm.net or brigid@affm.net if you have questions.

***STATEWIDE C.A.R.E.S. MEETING: Tuesday March 9th & April 13th from 10-11:30 A.M.**

Southern Maine C.A.R.E.S. Meetings:

District 1 (York County): Wednesday March 17th, April 21st 6:30PM-8:00PM and Tuesday March 23rd, April 27th 10:00AM-11:30AM

District 2 (Cumberland/Sagadahoc County): Tuesday March 9th, April 13th 7:00PM-8:30PM, Thursday March 25th, April 22nd Noon-1:30PM (*For Permanency Guardianship/Adoptive families*), Tuesday March 2nd, April 6th 10:00AM-11:30AM

District 3 (Androscoggin/Franklin/Oxford County): Thursday March 18th, April 15th 10:00-11:30AM and Thursday March 25th, April 22nd 7:00-8:30PM

Notices regarding C.A.R.E.S. Meetings are sent out via AFFM's email listserv. Please make sure you are signed up to receive emails from AFFM. RSVPs are required to obtain login information. Any questions or comments please email brigid@affm.net

Northern Maine C.A.R.E.S. Meetings:

District 4 (Knox/Lincoln/Waldo county): Wednesday March 10th, April 14th 5:00-6:30PM

District 5 (Kennebec/Somerset county): Wednesday March 3rd, April 7th 6-7:30PM

District 6 (Penobscot/Piscataquis county): Monday March 15th, April 19th 6-7:30PM

District 7 (Hancock/Washington county): Thursday March 25th, April 15th 6-7:30PM

District 8 (Aroostook county): Tuesday March 23rd, April 27th 6-7:30PM

****Kinship Only: Thursday March 18th, April 15th 7:30AM-9:00PM**

Notices regarding C.A.R.E.S. Meetings are sent out via AFFM's email listserv. Please make sure you are signed up to receive emails from AFFM. RSVPs are required to obtain login information. Any questions or comments please email sheila@affm.net

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National Foster Parent Association
Generations United
Partnering With: Department of Health and Human Services

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THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

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Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine, Inc. & The Kinship Program

New Resource Families Welcome! You are now receiving the Family Ties newsletter as part of your complimentary membership to AFFM! Below are all the ways you can connect with AFFM and learn more about services offered.

Locations:

304 Hancock Street Suite 2A, Bangor, ME 04401
333 Lincoln Street, Saco. Maine 04072

Phone: 207-827-2331

Email: info@affm.net

Website: www.affm.net

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Adoptive-and-Foster-Families-of-Maine-Inc/>

Save a tree, sign up for the E-Newsletter!