



Spring 2020 Newsletter



I cannot think of anything more vital in our lives than our need for human connection. Like food and water, it is a primal need that is essential to our well-being. When we are apart from the ones who we love and care about, it can tap into our strongest emotions: sadness, grief, loneliness, fear, anxiety are just a few of the many emotions we struggle with as we continue being isolated and separated from others.

Despite the physical distance, despite the fact that we cannot sense a client's aura of warmth in a room or guide a hand on a sand tray, BPAR's clinical team has rallied to maintain—and strengthen—connections so that our clients can stay on their path toward healing.

I am in awe of the adaptability that I have witnessed in the last months of our practice at BPAR: in the individuals and families who make therapy sessions a priority; in the support groups who collaboratively shift meeting times in order to include all members; and in our amazing team of clinicians who fearlessly tackle new telehealth technology and commit to giving the best possible support to those we serve regardless of the circumstances.

Our Spring Newsletter begins with recently taped “Why I Care” videos, written by each team member, that surely will touch you as you learn what motivates each individual to feel passionate about the work they do. You can see why it is important to each of us that we continue with [our mission](#) to **SUPPORT**, **EDUCATE**, and **CONNECT** all touched by adoption. I would like to mention that our Boston College intern, Justin Feng, poured his heart and soul into this project, and we thank him for creating this gift for us.

I feel grateful to all in our community who have faithfully supported us during the good times as well as the challenging times. BPAR would not exist without your generosity.

I wish for you all to stay safe and healthy.

Truly yours,

Jennifer Eckert, LICSW
Founder, Boston Post Adoption Resources

Why I Care

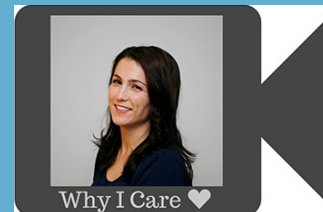
We are incredibly lucky that Justin Feng brought his creative spirit and energetic enthusiasm to BPAR as an intern, using media to convey [the BPAR mission](#). Here we share short (roughly 30-second) "Why I Care" video segments created by each member of our dedicated team.



Executive Director



Clinical Director



Clinical Supervisor



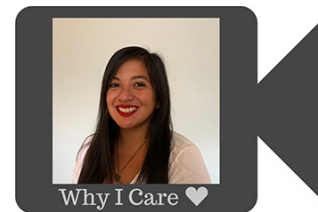
[Maya Rogers-Bursen>>](#)

Clinician



[Lisa Coppola>>](#)

Clinician



[Marta Sierra Drachenberg>>](#)

Clinician



[Erica Kramer>>](#)

Operations & Intake Director

BPAR's COVID-19 Response

Stepping Up: BPAR Provides Continuous Support

Days before the official Massachusetts stay-at-home advisory, BPAR was already putting a telehealth plan in place, so we were ready when it was no longer possible to meet in our Brookline space. We certainly do miss the in-person, face-to-face experience. But we continue to run full schedules providing therapy to individuals, families and groups; our team meets frequently for peer supervision; and we have ramped up our efforts to provide free resources through [our blog](#) and [COVID-19 Support page](#).

Regarding telehealth, clinician LC Coppola says, "While I have found that there is much missing without being in the same room together, this telehealth shift has been

interestingly beneficial in the way of clients being able to be in their own home and space, around their things. I have been introduced to pets, shown meaningful artwork and books of clients and read to from old journals."

Voices Unheard: 2nd Creative Forum Postponed

Following the packed-audience success of our November 2019 Voices Unheard event in Cambridge, a public forum where adult adoptees used creative expression to share their stories, BPAR was planning a May 2020 event. For now, we have postponed the next Voices Unheard forum until further notice. Clinician Lisa Coppola continues to assist adult adoptees in preparing for this opportunity to share the complex nuances of the adopted person's experience. Please [contact us](#) if you are interested in participating and visit our [Voices Unheard](#) page to learn more.

Welcome to Our New BPAR Clinical Intern!



BPAR's 2020 clinical intern, Kelly Vo, is a second year Master of Social Work student at Simmons University. During her previous position as an expectant/birth parent coordinator for a private adoption agency, she realized she had a passion for working with children and families touched by adoption. Kelly says, "I am thankful to be the clinical intern at BPAR and for the opportunity to become an adoption ally."

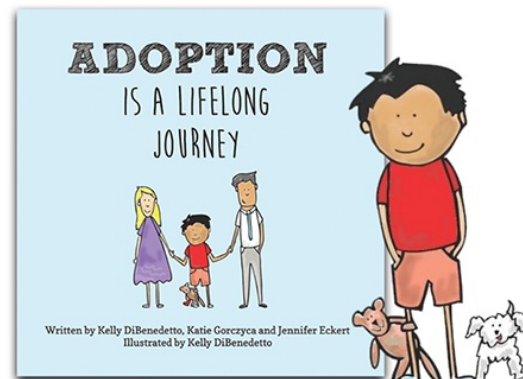
[Kelly's Bio>](#)

Happy 3rd Birthday to Our Book!

[*Adoption Is a Lifelong Journey*](#), narrated by child adoptee Charlie, continues to provide adoptive families with insight, prompts for discussion, tools and resources. **Your purchases and online reviews keep this resource circulating.**

Who benefits from the book:

- Adoptive or foster parents and their extended family members looking for insight into their child's unexpressed thoughts and needs at various points in development
- Adoption and foster care agencies



[Buy the Book](#)

that want to prepare parents and caregivers early in the adoption process

- Mental health professionals (like the team at BPAR!) searching for a tool to open a dialogue
- Prospective adoptive parents interested in learning about challenges they might encounter
- Teachers and school health facilitators who want to be inclusive of all students in their assignments and conversations



All proceeds from the sale of *Adoption Is a Lifelong Journey* support's BPAR mission. [Learn more here>>](#)

BPAR Clinical Director Kelly DiBenedetto illustrated our book

BPAR Clinicians Provide Adoption Agency Training

Adoptive and birth parent coordinators at Framingham-based Adoption Choices, an adoption agency, asked BPAR clinicians Kelly DiBenedetto and KC Craig to educate a group of parents who were at various stages in the adoption process.

Adoption Choices Coordinators Marissa Zwelling, LICSW, and Raquel Woodard, LICSW told us: "We received wonderful feedback about your presentation. Unanimously, everyone raved that it was incredibly informative and presented in a manner they connected with. They very much liked both of you. Several stated that your warmth and passion for working with adoptees and their families (birth and adopted) was very evident and that they would not hesitate to contact BPAR if and when needed."

Our Favorite Self-Care Tips



Charlie's mom models self-care in *Adoption Is a Lifelong Journey* [illustration by Kelly DiBenedetto]

As mental health professionals, our team prioritizes self-care for ourselves as well as our clients. Here's how we've been practicing self-care during the COVID-19 crisis.

Jennifer Eckert:

The most important self-care tool that I have been using is to meditate every day. I use Calm, but there are many excellent free guided meditations on YouTube right now. My

favorite self-care book is *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times* by Pema Chodron. It is invaluable to me right now.

Kelly DiBenedetto:

A consistent morning workout routine has been key to managing my own stress and anxiety. Once a week I bake something indulgent and delicious to enjoy throughout the week. And I am practicing gratitude as much as I can. I say thank you to pretty much everything in my house.

KC Craig:

I exercise almost every day, I do a 5-minute daily meditation, and I focus on one specific thing I am grateful for, and also choose one thing to let go of, each day.

Maya Rogers-Bursen:

It's been refreshing to connect with friends and family more often over FaceTime. I have been perfecting my grilling skills, and exercising every day. I think the more-than-occasional scoop of brownie batter ice cream has been the best self care of all!

LC Coppola:

I go for a walk every day or do yoga. I also attend support groups every week and have been doing that for over a decade. The relationships I have developed over the years in these groups have been with me through the best and worst times and are absolutely priceless to me.

Marta Sierra Drachenberg:

My self-care consists of almost-daily exercise, daily check-ins with adoptee chosen sisters, lots of time with my cat and dog, and the *Great British Baking Show*.

Erica Kramer:

My self care: daily long walks with my dogs and weekly Zoom calls with family and friends —could not get through everything without those!!

Your Donations Count!

As a 501 (c)(3), BPAR relies on donations to make our mission possible. Your generosity allows us to speak at conferences, create resources like our book and blog, and offer a free initial phone consultation to anyone who reaches out to us. Thank you!

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STAY CONNECTED



[BPAR.org](https://www.bpar.org)

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