



The Latest News from BPAR

Spring 2022 Newsletter



Dear Friend of BPAR

As we welcome spring with open arms at BPAR, we also notice that our arms feel a little heavier than usual. It has always been our nature to be authentic and transparent, and these values feel especially important now. It is not in our nature to dwell on the negative. However, what we know from our work and through research is that once we can name the challenges and feelings that we are experiencing, we can put supports in place. Then we can move toward healing.

Here are a few important challenges to name:

- We had to close our waitlist. This makes all of us very sad and frustrated. Our clinicians are passionate about what we do and our mission to help everyone in the adoption constellation. But our schedules are at full capacity and the pool of new, qualified clinicians is scarce.
- Our country is in the midst of a mental health crisis with increased rates of depression and anxiety due to the impact of the pandemic and racial reckoning. Our clients are navigating this crisis with the burden of underlying traumas, often multiple, which are exacerbated by this stress. The impact of this is far-reaching and touches upon everyone—at all ages and stages of development.

But as a nonprofit organization, BPAR will never let these challenges keep us from delivering our mission. Here are some of the steps we are taking:

- We are listening to you. We surveyed the waitlist to find out the most pressing topics of need and have created specialty support groups to help address those needs.
- We are leaning into our mission to educate. We are writing books and working on our learning center so we can educate other mental health professionals and make adoption-competent care more accessible to the community.
- We are practicing what we preach. We are tending to our staff and making sure they are okay. They are the foundation of this organization, and we are making sure to uplift their voices and their self-care needs.

Even with today's challenges, BPAR is strong, resilient, and resourceful. Join us in learning more about the creative ways we are reaching out.

Take good care,

JW : Kelly

Kelly DiBenedetto, Executive Director, Clinical Director
Jennifer Eckert, Founder, Board Chair

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Reaching Out with New Team Members



Meet Clinician Angela Smith

Please welcome Angela Smith, LICSW, our new full-time clinician experienced in providing individual and group therapy as well as advocacy and support to survivors of abuse within the legal and child welfare systems. Angela uses a holistic approach which includes a trauma-informed lens, cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, as well as systems and structural approaches.

[Angela's Full Bio>>](#)



Meet Clinician Seana Peterson

Please welcome Seana Peterson, LICSW, who has joined BPAR as a part-time therapist running our Adult Adoptee Group. Seana's work centers on healing one's relationship with the self, lineage, and community, weaving together evidence-based approaches (EMDR and IFS), somatic approaches (EFT Tapping), and the cosmic language of astrology and the tarot.

[Seana's Full Bio>>](#)



Meet Office Manager Sharim Shoman

Our new office manager, Sharim Shoman, has provided more than a decade of administrative and operational support to a wide variety of nonprofit organizations with diverse missions, including at-risk youth involved in the juvenile justice system, pediatric cancer survivors, substance use disorder and the opioid epidemic, and workforce development.

[Sharim's Full Bio>>](#)

Reaching Out In Other Ways



Here are some of the creative ideas the BPAR team has implemented to not only respond to this unprecedented mental health crisis, but to also proactively reach out to a growing network of individuals, families, and professionals who have connections to the adoption constellation and share our passion for providing support.

New Ideas for Groups and Workshops

Many adoptive parents seek therapy because they are worried about their child's dysregulated behaviors, often arising due to past trauma, a common theme in adoption. In response to a survey of parents on our waiting list, we created a one-time specialty group, held on April 28, called **Understanding and Managing Difficult Behaviors in Your Adoptive Child**.

In addition, BPAR has offered two workshop series this year. These non-therapeutic virtual sessions open the door to attendees living outside of Massachusetts.

- LC Coppola has reprised her **Voices Unheard Writers Workshop** for adult adoptees, each month focusing on a theme. Healing, identity, and intimacy are the focus in the next three workshops.
- Darci Nelsen wraps up her monthly **Wellness Workshops** on May 11 when she teaches **Trauma-Informed Yoga**. This is open to all, and we are offering it at a special price of \$20 per person. Please join us!

[Learn more and sign up>>](#)

New and Renewed Resources

Answering Requests

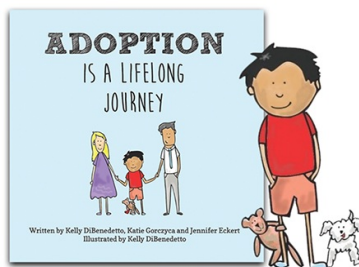
Our intake director, Erica Kramer, is allocating more time to the intake process to enable her to fulfill post adoption resource requests to even more adoptees, families, and professionals, even if the appropriate resources are referrals or other outside sources. She responds to every request. Recently she received the following heartfelt message: "Erica, thank you for being so responsive and helpful. Your actions have restored my faith in being heard."

New Surprises

We have some nice surprises coming your way soon with respect to an adult adoptee journal that BPAR will be publishing soon on Amazon! This is no ordinary journal. In addition to guided writing prompts based on common themes in adoption, it has educational components such as a Post Adoption Vocabulary section, suggested reading, and detailed instructions to help volunteers run adult adoptee peer groups using the journal as a framework for weekly meetings. BPAR clinician Lisa Coppola, LMHC, has been creating this special resource based on her personal experience as an adoptee, lifelong support group member, and writing specialist.

Join the Journal Mailing List!

5 Years and Going Strong



Speaking of books, it's Charlie's 5th birthday! Who is Charlie? He's the narrator of our 2017 paperback, ***Adoption Is a Lifelong Journey***. We are celebrating 5 years of sales on Amazon and wonderful feedback from parent readers and professionals who say they turn to this book over and over. [Learn more>>](#)

New Skills

As part of our mission to educate and enrich our team, BPAR provides ongoing opportunities for staff training. This year, BPAR clinicians have engaged in learning about nonprofit management, leadership, communications, therapies such as EMDR, and more.

Since our beginnings, we have provided supervision for graduate-level students interested in career in post adoption clinical support. We are happy to report that BPAR's current clinical intern, Elena Li, will stay with us for another year!

New Geographic Areas and Audiences

At our Voices Unheard: Real Adoptee Stories forum on November 30, 2021, more than 132 people attended the Cambridge, MA event in person, virtually, or by recording. This more than doubled the attendance at our first event in 2019.

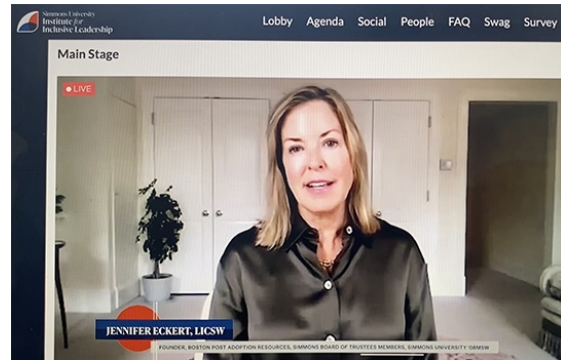
Prospective clients from more than 125 towns across Massachusetts have sought our clinical services or other forms of support. We have also answered calls and assisted people from 16 other states and even the U.K. Our blogs and free resource pages reach tens of thousands who visit the BPAR.org website each year. And the ripples keep growing!

WCVB channel 5 Boston asked Executive Director Kelly DiBenedetto and Intake Director Erica Kramer to weigh in on [preparing for DNA test kit surprises](#) on December 16, 2021.



Good Morning America interviewed BPAR clinician Marta Sierra for their segment on a [search and reunion story](#) on November 18, 2021.

Board Chair and BPAR Founder Jennifer Eckert, LICSW, was invited to introduce keynote speakers Brené Brown and Simone Biles at the Simmons Institute for Inclusive Learning on April 13. The focus was courage and connections, and they discussed the difficult decision Simone made to withdraw from the Olympics as well as how to control negative self-talk and connect to ourselves through therapy. As Brené said, "Our connection with others is only as solid as our connection with ourselves."



We Are Grateful When You Reach Out, Too

All of us at BPAR greatly appreciate your dedication to educating yourself about post adoption mental health themes and paying it forward with your knowledge and understanding. Every act of kindness, no matter how small, makes a difference.

In addition, every dollar donated to BPAR's mission has a similar impact. We cannot do all of this special work without your financial support. Thank you!

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Warm Wishes for Maya



We would like to wish Maya the best of luck as she starts her new practice specializing in post adoption counseling. We will miss her, and she will forever be a part of the BPAR team and community.

STAY CONNECTED



