

# Increasing Familiarity of Different Cultures in Multi-Racial Formed Families: A Family to Family Perspective



Virtual Panel hosted by  
Formed Families Forward

October 4, 2021

7:00- 8:30 PM

# Formed Families Forward - who we are...

- A family-led resource center in Northern Virginia supporting foster, adoptive and kinship families raising children, youth & young adults with special needs, and professionals who work with our families.
- We offer free training, consultations to families, events, resources, and systems navigation. Also - **peer support groups**; webinars; virtual trainings; **youth classes**; videos and other resources.
- Family partner to Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS; a VDOE project)

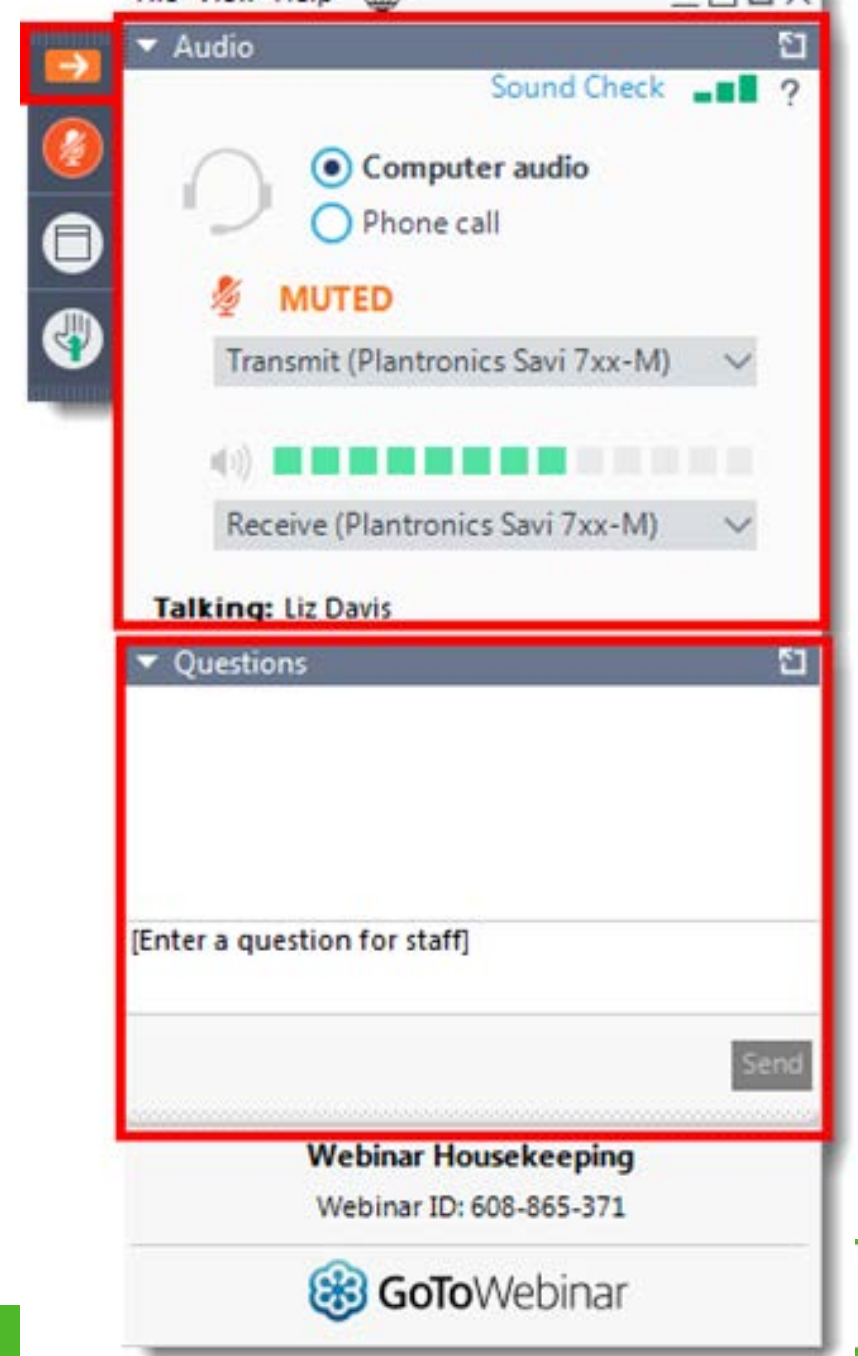
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# Housekeeping

- Use **Questions** pod to pose questions and comment; others will not see your questions/comments.
- Download handouts from HANDOUTS pod.
- All recordings, slides and handouts will be on FFF website under RESOURCES: WEBINARS.
- Email [info@formedfamiliesforward.org](mailto:info@formedfamiliesforward.org) if you need certificate of attendance



The screenshot displays the GoToWebinar interface. On the left, a vertical sidebar contains icons for navigation: a right-pointing arrow (highlighted with a red box), a microphone, a document, and a hand. The main area features two pods: the 'Audio' pod and the 'Questions' pod, both outlined in red. The 'Audio' pod shows 'Computer audio' selected, a 'MUTED' status, and a volume slider. The 'Questions' pod has a text input field with the placeholder '[Enter a question for staff]' and a 'Send' button. Below the pods, the text 'Talking: Liz Davis' is visible. At the bottom, the webinar title 'Webinar Housekeeping' and ID '608-865-371' are shown, along with the GoToWebinar logo.

# Learning objectives

Through the sharing of their experience, panelists will:

- increase awareness of factors that contribute to healthy racial and cultural identity in children and youth;
- explore research on educational and social emotional outcomes for children of color raised in households headed by white parents and caregivers;
- expand understanding of common challenges faced by multi-racial families;
- share strategies for supporting children and youth who experience racism; a
- increase familiarity with local and regional resources for supporting multi-racial families through supports including mentoring.

## Panelists!

- **Barry Farmer**, adoptive father of three, former foster parent and host of *The Barry Farmer Morning Show*
- **Elisa Rosman**, Ph.D., mother of four and an adoptive mom of three children from China
- **Beth Spivack**, MSW, mother of two and an adoptive mom of a daughter from Ethiopia
- **Markeya Jones**, Psy.D., Clinical Director at The Multicultural Clinical Center
- Kelly Henderson, Facilitator, FFF

## In our Formed Families

- Identity development for young people who have experienced foster care, kinship care and adoption is often complex.
- Experiences with birth families and foster families and other living arrangements influence children's sense of self, family, community and culture.
- Some young people who have been in care may identify with several cultures and communities, whereas some may not know where they come from.
- Understanding one's place and role in racial and ethnic equity and inclusion work must begin with the journey of understanding oneself.

(Annie E. Casey Foundation)

# Types of Loss Specific to Child Raised by Parents of Another Race, Ethnicity or Culture

- Loss of culture
- Loss of religion
- Loss of racial connections
- Traditions

(Center for Adoption Support and Education)

# Strong Cultural and Racial Identity is Critical

- Evidence across domains: mental health and education
- Youth who have strong cultural and racial identity are more likely to experience good mental health outcomes, though the buffering effect may vary by race and circumstance (Rogers-Sirin & Gupta, 2012; Williams et al., 2018; Woo et al., 2019).
- Cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds of students play an integral role in their beliefs, practices, and expectations for education (Boykin & Toms, 1985).
- Strong self-concept is key to educational motivation (particularly engagement & learning in classroom); linked to higher grades (Rouland, 2017).
- For students of color, racial identity can serve as a protective and promotive factor of achievement-related outcomes (Rouland, 2017)



# Families Matter!

Families are a key contextual asset for youth.

- Family relationships, levels of bonding and communication, and expectations profoundly shape a young person's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.
- The way a family responds to adversity impacts overall family health and wellbeing.
- Families represent integrated systems. Positive or negative experiences of one family member affect the experiences of other family members

(Campine et al., 2018)

# Our Roles

- Parents, caregivers and professionals have a responsibility to provide children with every opportunity to have a strong racial identity and connection to their roots.
- Recognize and acknowledge the reality of racism. Foster conversations about race and racism. Be cognizant of micro-aggressions, subtle forms of racist stereotyping.
- Resist buying into the “lucky rescued child” stereotype. Having a stable family does not diminish the well-being that comes when we meet a child’s need for connection to and pride in their racial heritage.
- Engage in ongoing, age-appropriate conversations with children about how they want to be represented or participate in civil discourse. Give them a voice and respect their decisions.

(adapted from Garlinghouse, 2012; Murph-Brown & Stevens, 2020)

## Acknowledgment of Racism and Difference

“Transracial adoptive parents should recognize that parenting brown-skinned children involves not only parenting them and raising the children to become successful, independent, responsible, and kind adults, but also instilling in the children racial pride and an understanding and acceptance of the child’s racial cultural norms, racial reality and history.”

- Garlinghouse, 2012

## Panel question 1

- Tell us about you, your family and your personal experiences as a multi-racial family as well as relevant professional experiences supporting diverse families.

## Panel question 2

What are some of the challenges that you have encountered in supporting your child or children who are of different races, ethnicities or cultures?

## Panel question 3

- From your clinical perspective and experience, what are the greatest challenges families face in supporting a child in a multi-racial home?

## Panel question 4

- How have you built on the strengths of racial and cultural diversity in your family or the families you work with? What advice do you have for parents and caregivers that are raising children/teenagers in a multi-racial home?

## Panel question 5

Tell us about your organization (if applicable).

Tell us about available formal or informal resources and supports for multi-racial formed families that either you or other families have found to be particularly beneficial.



# Resources on Race

- [“How To Be an Antiracist”](#) by Ibram X. Kendi
- [“Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption”](#) by Bryan Stevenson
- [“The Fire Next Time”](#) by James Baldwin
- [“The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness”](#) by M. Alexander
- [“Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race”](#) by Beverly Daniel Tatum
- [“White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People To Talk About Racism”](#) by Robin DiAngelo
- [“Between the World and Me”](#) by Ta -Nehisi Coates
- [Teaching Tolerance | Diversity, Equity And Justice](#) website of the Southern Poverty Law Center

# Resources on Parenting Children of a Different Race

- [The Realities of Raising a Kid of a Different Race \(time.com\)](#)
- [White parents, Black children and the lessons they need to learn - The Washington Post](#)
- [Transracial Adoption — What Parents Need to Know \(Part One\) - Boston Post Adoption Resources \(bpar.org\)](#)
- [Being Anti-Racist: A Critical Way to Support Children of Color in Foster Care and Adoption](#) from NACAC
- “[Raising Multiracial Children: Tools for Nurturing Identity in a Racialized World](#)” by Farzana Nayani
- [“Come Rain or Come Shine: A White Parent's Guide to Adopting and Parenting Black Children”](#) by Rachel Garlinghouse

## Regional Resources

- Center for Adoption Support and Education
- North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC)
- MANY resources in our online Family Resource Directory, <https://resourcedirectory.formedfamiliesforward.org/>

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