

Comfort in Chaos: Understanding Brain Trauma

"I spent those years hiding the past, keeping myself at arms length from any real relationships and doing the one thing I was knew I was good at, "lying". I didn't know it at the time, but I found myself in what I now refer to as "trauma brain." Going to that comfortable place in my mind of Fight, Flight, Freeze or Appease. Chaos was comfortable for me. When things in my life were going well, I looked for and caused chaos for myself so I could feel "comfortable." I of course didn't realize, at least consciously, that I was doing it; until I started to become increasingly unsettled with the life I was living. I had a good job, managed to get married and had a child, but I was only comfortable in the unknown and I wanted to change. In an effort to find peace in my life, I initially turned to self-help books. I found a little relief, but often found myself going back to old habits. I started to realize that hiding my demons was only making me more depressed, and more disconnected. Finally, I realized that I had to tell my story. I wrote [Garbage Bag Suitcase](#) and began diving into understanding trauma and its effects on the brain. "

Taken from [Garbage Bag Suitcase](#) by Shenandoah Chefalo, who went through the foster care system as a child. Overcoming her many adversities, Shen became part of the 3% of all foster care children who get into college and graduate. She became a successful business woman, got married, and had a daughter. Despite her numerous achievements in life she still suffers from the long-term effects of neglect, and the coping skills that she adapted in her childhood are not always productive in her adult life. [Garbage Bag Suitcase](#) is not only the inspiring and hair-raising story of one woman's journey to overcome her desolate childhood but it also presents grass-root solutions on how to revamp the broken foster care system. <http://www.garbagebagsuitcase.com/blog>

Foster Parent Training Through MSU

The MSU School of Social Work offers classes for foster parents, many of which are free. Check out the [courses here and type "foster"](#) in the search bar.

**Capital Area Interagency Coalition
2016 Foster/Adopt**

PRIDE Training Schedule

October Meeting Location:
Eaton County DHHS)
1050 Independence Blvd.
Charlotte, MI 48813

RSVP to your CFC licensing worker to register for these training sessions

Session	Date	Time
1	Tuesday October 4, 2016	6pm – 9pm
2	Thursday October 6, 2016	6pm – 9pm
3 & 4	Saturday October 8, 2016	9am – Noon, 1-4pm (Potluck Lunch)
5	Tuesday October 18, 2016	6pm – 9pm
6	Thursday October 20, 2016	6pm – 9pm
7	Saturday October 22, 2016	9am – Noon

Why to avoid saying “calm down” to upset or angry children

The word calm means ‘not showing or feeling nervousness, anger, or other emotions.’ Helping kids calm down is wonderful, teaching them the tools so that they can achieve calm on their own is even better, but simply telling them to “calm down” isn’t *teaching* them anything. It’s saying, “you are not allowed to experience anger or other emotions at the moment, stop.” Here are a few other phrases that can help a child:

ALTERNATIVES TO THE PHRASE "CALM DOWN"

1. I SEE THAT YOU ARE HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME, LET ME HELP YOU.
2. TAKE A DEEP BREATH.
3. IF YOU NEED TO HIT SOMETHING, HIT THIS PILLOW.
4. THAT CAN BE SO FRUSTRATING, LET'S FIGURE THIS OUT TOGETHER.
5. I SEE THAT YOU ARE MAD, HOW DOES THAT FEEL IN YOUR BODY?
6. COUNT TO 10.
7. WANT TO SQUEEZE MY HAND?
8. HOW ABOUT A BIG HUG.
9. LET'S FOCUS ON FIXING THE PROBLEM TOGETHER.
10. IF YOU ARE FEELING SAD, YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT IT.

Upcoming Training: Claiming Shame Resilience and Self Compassion for Foster, Adoptive, Kin, and Birth Parents #616-16

Date/time: Oct 16, 8:30 AM • Program 9:00 AM – 12:15 PM

Location: Mt. Pleasant Comfort Inn & Suites Hotel & Conference Center, 2424 South Mission, Mt. Pleasant, MI

Cost: Free to all birth, adoptive, foster, and kinship parents

Presenter: Anne Lange, BSN, LMSW, ACSW, has served as a clinical faculty member for the MSU School of Social Work.

Register at swkce@msu.edu or 517-353-3060

SAVE THE DATE for our upcoming children's Christmas party at the People's Church on **December 12, 2016** from 5:30-7:30pm

Relatively Speaking...

MSU School of Social Work offers caregiver trainings in your area and on the web! Michigan State University offers a support center for families like yours called the Kinship Care Resource Center. You can find out more information by calling 1-800-535-1218 or e-mailing kinship@msu.edu

New Foster Parent Orientation:

Do you know someone who might be interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent? Orientations are held every other Monday from 6:00-8:00pm at CFC. The next dates of orientation are **October 24 & November 14** Contact Linda Rathbun at 517-882-4000 ext. 140 to RSVP.

Support Groups for You:

Foster Parent Support Group – 1st Tues 6-8pm (free training credits!) RSVP to sue@childandfamily.org or at ext. 141

Adoptive Parent Support Group – 4th Monday 6:30-8:30 (free call ahead childcare) RSVP to koreywheeler@childandfamily.org ext. 133