Abstract

In this qualitative study the relationships of seven adults who lived in foster care in British Columbia were explored through questionnaires and interviews. The interviews focused on participants' relationships with birth parents; social supports; comfort with individuals and groups; perceptions of trust and the impact of foster care on relationships; relationship anxieties and avoidances; and important adult influences. Three themes emerged through analysis: apprehension in getting close to others, awareness of dysfunction, and holding onto specific others. This study contributes to foster care research the much needed perspective of adults who have lived in care, and provides increased understanding of the impact of foster care on relationships. The findings of this study support research advocating for long-term placements; support services for foster children and caregivers; consideration for alternative types of care; and the significant role of "very important persons" in the lives of individuals who grew up in foster care.

Keywords: foster care; attachment; loss; friendship, important other, outcomes