

LGBTQ Families - Research Article Summaries**18. The Transition to Parenthood for Adoptive Gay Male Couples: Common Experiences Across Three Stages of Adoptive Parenting**

Gianino, M. (2006). *Adaptation and transformation: The transition to adoptive parenthood for gay male couples*. Presentation given at the Family Pride Academic Symposium, May, 2006, Philadelphia.

This study described the transition to parenthood of 8 adoptive gay male couples from New England. During the pre-adoption stage, common experiences for couples included dealing with internalized beliefs that gay parenting could harm children and dealing with grief concerning the unlikelihood of gay male parenting. However, couples felt their relationships were strong and mature and they often contemplated parenthood- driven by their age and a strong desire for a family.

During the adoption process, couples commonly engaged in collaborative decision-making, such as whether or not to disclose their sexual orientation. Participants who often experienced anti-gay and anti-male bias in becoming parents developed resources for coping with stress and set boundaries with families and friends.

After adopting, couples dealt with reactions of extended family and friends, coped with feelings of isolation as new, gay, or male parents, dealt with visibility, open disclosure, and discrimination. They also felt family pride, took on non-traditional parenting roles, experienced greater intimacy/ relationship permanence, and felt their child was a catalyst for change in their relationships and personal lives.

Participants had been partnered an average of 12 years, with a range of 4 to 21 years. Most were White, highly educated, middle-upper class, and an average age of 41 years. The majority worked full-time; one worked part-time and one was a stay-at-home dad. Between the couples, there were ten children who were between one and eight years old. Nine children were male and one child was female. Eight were adopted internationally and two were adopted domestically—all were adopted from birth to age six. Six children were Asian, two White, one Latino, and one Bi-racial.