# Triggers for Adoption Issues

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| **Adoption Issue** | **Possible triggers** |
| **Loss** | Child’s birthday  Anniversaries of prior separations  Holidays  Adoptive family moves  Any loss (pet dies, friend moves away)  Transition from one school level to another  High school graduation |
| **Abandonment** | First day of school  Going to sleep-over camp  Being “dumped” by significant other  High school graduation  Divorce of adoptive parents  Adoptive family moves  Anniversaries of prior separations |
| **Identity** | Adolescence  Insensitive remarks from family, friends, strangers  School assignments (Family tree)  Critical incidents involving racism for a transracially adopted child  Pregnancy  Mid-life crisis |
| **Divided Loyalties** | Mother’s Day  Engagement or marriage  Visits or contact with birth siblings or other birth relatives  Holidays |
| **Trust** | Felt betrayal in a relationship  Being “dumped” by significant other  Discovery of information that had not been shared honestly |
| **Control** | Adolescence  School  Parental limits |
| **Shame/Guilt** | Failures (not making the team or winning in sports; school failures)  Rejection experiences (being excluded by peers; feeling as though birth children in the adoptive home are loved or valued more) |

Note: In addition to the adoption triggers listed above, adopted children may also experience trauma triggers: sensory experiences (sights, smells, sounds) associated with traumatic events in the individual’s past. These trauma triggers can generate extreme fear and overwhelming emotion. As self-protection, individuals may experience *fight* (rage, destructiveness, aggression), *flight* (running away, dissociation), or *freeze* (numbness, irrational thought) reactions.