



Karen Moore, Clinical Director, ACO, MA, RSW

Biography: Karen is the Clinical Director at the Adoption Council of Ontario. She is also a trainer, facilitating the Pathways to Permanence training, the ACT training as well as other workshops. She has a private practice working with families who are part of a permanency journey. Karen has presented and spoken widely about adoption, permanence, and working with families who have been formed through permanency. And, most importantly, she is the mother of four amazing children aged 26, 18, 17 and 16—her family formed through a permanency journey!!



Sylvia Gibbons, Parent Liaison, ACO

Biography: Sylvia is the ACO's PACT Parent Liaison. In this role she assists and guides Pathways families to form ongoing parent support groups in their communities. Sylvia continues to provide peer support to many adoptive families throughout Ontario. Sylvia founded and runs a Support Group for Adoptive Families and founded and runs an Adopted Youth Group, both of which are in Simcoe County. Sylvia has been a PRIDE trainer for eight years. Sylvia is also an adoptive parent.

Workshop title: *Trauma & Loss: Creating School Communities of Well-being***Workshop description:**

All teachers have children in their classrooms that are dealing with the impact of trauma and loss in their lives. Some through their journeys of foster care and adoption; others through immigration as a refugees, violence in the home, conflict in parental separation and divorce, serious illness, a death in the family and the recent impact of the pandemic. Children and youth touched by foster care and adoption, in particular, have told us that they want a school environment that is positive, inclusive, safe and sensitive to their unique needs and life experiences.

ACO has worked collectively with youth, families, educators and other professionals to develop this workshop to assist educators in creating school communities of wellbeing for adopted and foster children, and other vulnerable children, who have been touched by trauma and loss.

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- explain the benefits of trauma-sensitive schools
- describe the effects of early life adversity on childhood brain development & learning
- understand that adoption is trauma, and view adoption and foster care through a trauma lens
- develop new ways of understanding and "decoding" children's behaviour
- modify their interactions with children to reflect this better understanding
- utilize positive adoption language and trauma-sensitive school assignments
- access resources & implement next steps to create trauma-sensitive schools and classrooms