# Triggers for Adoption Issues

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| **Adoption Issue** | **Possible triggers** |
| **Loss** | Child’s birthdayAnniversaries of prior separationsHolidaysAdoptive family movesAny loss (pet dies, friend moves away)Transition from one school level to anotherHigh school graduation |
| **Abandonment** | First day of school Going to sleep-over campBeing “dumped” by significant otherHigh school graduationDivorce of adoptive parentsAdoptive family movesAnniversaries of prior separations |
| **Identity** | AdolescenceInsensitive remarks from family, friends, strangersSchool assignments (Family tree)Critical incidents involving racism for a transracially adopted childPregnancyMid-life crisis |
| **Divided Loyalties** | Mother’s DayEngagement or marriageVisits or contact with birth siblings or other birth relativesHolidays |
| **Trust** | Felt betrayal in a relationshipBeing “dumped” by significant otherDiscovery of information that had not been shared honestly |
| **Control** | AdolescenceSchoolParental 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.