

# Self-Directed Search and Reunion Information



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## Introduction

The Adoption Reunion Registry has been in operation since 1991, through Family Services of Greater Vancouver. This program is funded by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, British Columbia.

Since the 1920's there have been over 40,000 adoptions in the province of British Columbia. The Adoption Reunion Registry's mandate is to provide search, intermediary and counselling services to those whose lives have been affected by adoption.

The Adoption Reunion Registry, in partnership with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, has written this booklet to provide guidance to those who wish to conduct a search on their own.

## Is This Booklet for You?

Adoptee's and birth family choose to connect with each other for many reasons. For some it starts and ends with medical history and curiosity. For others, it goes much further. Reasons for initiating search and reunion are as unique and varied as the outcome.

This booklet is specifically geared for people who have already made the decision to search on their own. It is designed for those whose adoptions were finalized in British Columbia. It could also be of assistance to those whose adoptions were finalized elsewhere – although legislation will differ. For more details, please contact the provincial registry where the adoption was finalized (See [Appendix](#)).

If you have not yet made the decision to search on your own, you may want to contact a [support group](#) in your area or call the Adoption Reunion Registry. Some people find it empowering to search on their own, while others feel more comfortable using professional search services. Speaking with others may help you decide which route to take.

## Search Options

With the changes in legislation in 1996, adoptee's and birth parents now have greater access to documents that contain identifying information. Some have chosen to take this information and search on their own, while others have chosen to use the Adoption Reunion Registry's professional search and intermediary services.

The Adoption Reunion Registry's [Passive Registry](#) is a database where both parties have to be registered for a match to occur. There is no search conducted. When a match occurs, a reunion consultant is involved, as needed.

If there is no match on the Passive Registry, another option is to register on the [Active Registry](#). In this case, a search is conducted. When the person is located, a reunion consultant acts as the "neutral middle person" on the initial contact. The reunion consultant's support is available throughout the reunion process, as needed by either party.

If you have chosen to search on your own, you may still want to sign up on the Adoption Reunion Registry's Passive Registry. If your birth relative is registered, there is no need to continue the search.

If you do need to search and have decided to proceed on your own, we suggest you read this entire booklet before beginning. It is important to be prepared before making contact. We encourage you to consult additional material and [support groups](#) for more search ideas.

If you would prefer the Adoption Reunion Registry to conduct a search on your behalf, please contact us for an information package or go to "[How To Register](#)".

## **Beginning Your Search**

The first step to beginning your search is organizing your information. Many professional searchers insist that the key to completing a search is organizing and recording every step and detail of the search.

By documenting your search steps in a journal, you will have a better idea of what is missing, where you want to go, where you have come from, and what else you need to know. You can see what leads are worth developing, where you went wrong, and things you have overlooked. You become your own best teacher in your search.

Since every search is different, no two search journals will look alike, but all will include certain pertinent facts. You should record the name of the person you are looking for and the date of birth. Every vital piece of information you obtain about this person should be written in the search journal (i.e., spouse, children, parents, siblings, last known address, etc.). A summary of these key facts should be recorded on a page in your journal that is easily accessible (i.e., front page). You may be asked for this information over and over again during your search.

Documenting every step that you take is very important. Record dates, who you spoke with and the result of the conversation. You may need to refer back to these contacts at some later point to glean further information.

## Where to Start Looking for Information

### Vital Statistics

**Original Birth Registration (OBR):** A certificate of live birth usually completed by a birth mother at the time of her child's birth. It also documents any changes made to the child's name.

**Adoption Order:** The document legalizing a child's adoption and reflecting any name changes.

With adoptions finalized in the province of British Columbia, adopted adults and birth parents can access Adoption Orders and Original Birth Registrations through Vital Statistics (birth fathers CANNOT access this document unless they are named on the OBR).

- As a birth parent, you will receive the full adopted name of the child you relinquished. You will not receive the names of the adoptive parents, as this is considered third party information.
- If you are an adopted adult, the document will contain the full name of your birth mother at the time of your birth, her place of birth and her residency at the time. Quite often, this document will not include the name of your birth father. Historically, unless birth parents were married, a birth father's name would not be included on this document.

The only reason this identifying information would not be released to you is if a Disclosure Veto has been filed by the other party.

**When a veto has been placed:** an adoptee will usually receive this document with the child's last name and birth mother's names deleted. A birth parent will receive the document with the adoptive name deleted.

For more information, please call Vital Statistics at 1-800-663-8328 or write:  
British Columbia Vital Statistics Agency,  
Confidential Services,  
PO Box 9657, Stn Prov Govt,  
Victoria, BC V8W 9P3.

Be clear about your situation (i.e., "I'm an adopted adult looking for my Original Birth Registration" or, "I'm a birth mother looking for my birth daughter's Order of Adoption"). Remember, this information is now legally yours. Be careful about the distinction between a Birth Certificate and an Original Birth Registration; they are two different documents.

## **Information, Privacy and Records Services Branch (IPRSB)**

**Adoption File:** A paper record held by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (Adoption Division) compiled at the time of the relinquishment.

With adoptions finalized in the province of British Columbia, IPRSB will provide adopted adults and birth parents with information from the adoption file. The amount of information you receive, will vary from person to person. You may receive family history, medical information provided at the time of the adoption, and other correspondence. Again, the amount of detail will vary from person to person. Please keep in mind that there have been occasions where the information provided by a birth parent is false or has been recorded inaccurately.

This information is accessed under and governed by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. You generally are not given anything that is deemed "identifying". Obtaining your OBR and sending a copy (along with your request) to IPRSB will enable them to release more information.

Please contact IPRSB for more information. Their address is:  
Information, Privacy and Records Services Branch,  
Ministry of Children and Family Development,  
PO Box 9702, Stn. Prov. Govt.,  
Victoria, BC, V8V 9S1,  
250 387-0820

## **What Should I Look for in These Records?**

### **Birth Mother's Name**

Unless vetoed, the OBR will provide her maiden name. Check not only how her name is recorded, but how she signs. This may indicate whether she uses her first name or her middle name. When you read through the adoption file, you may find that the social worker has used an abbreviation for birth mother (i.e., Kathy for Kathleen). This information is useful, should you decide to make family calls.

### **Birth Mother's Age**

The OBR will indicate your birth mother's age at the time of your birth. Younger adoptee's may find they have an actual date of birth. The adoption file may also contain her age or date of birth.

### **Birth Mother's Place of Birth**

The OBR records her place of birth. The adoption file may indicate other places of residence during her earlier years. This information can assist you if you decide to look for family members. For example, checking city directories at the time of her birth may lead to finding her parents' names.

### **Siblings of the Birth Parent**

This information is found in the adoption file. Names are not always recorded, but other useful information may include: the number of brothers/sisters, marital status and occupation.

### **Birth Father**

Birth fathers are rarely listed on the OBR unless the birth parents were married. Sometimes the section under "Father" can provide additional information, but it can be deceiving. The name mentioned could be the name of your birth mother's legal husband, rather than your birth father. However, this person may still be a useful contact. The adoption file may contain birth father's background information, physical description and age or year of birth. In many cases, the birth father's identity can not be disclosed. Please note that within the adoption file, a birth father may be referred to as a "Pufa" or "putative father".

### **Birth Parent(s)' Occupations**

The OBR and adoption file may reveal the occupations of the birth parents and other family members. If she/he was still a student, it may give an indication of what her/his goals were which could indicate a possible future occupation.

### **Birth Mother's Address**

The OBR reveals the birth mother's physical and mailing address at the time of the birth. The address given could be the maternity home or that of a relative. The mailing address may be a better indication of where her family was located at the time. The adoption file may help you clarify the addresses of the birth parent.

### **Birth Child's Adopted Name**

The OBR and Adoption Order will reveal the adoptee's name. Birth parents will typically not receive the names of the adoptive parents, as it is considered third party information.

## **Adoptive Parents' Residence**

The registry stamp on the Adoption Order will indicate where and when the adoption was finalized. The location of the Supreme Court registry may be a vital clue as to where the adoptive parents resided. For example, if the order was filed in New Westminster, it is quite likely the adoptive parents resided in the Lower Mainland at the time of the adoption. This may give you a starting point for your search.

## **Adoptive Parents' Occupation**

The adoption file will disclose the adopting parents' occupations at the time of the adoption. As city directories include people's occupations (along with their names and addresses), this information is vital to identifying the correct family.

## **Additional Sources of Information**

### **City Directories**

City directories are a wealth of information and are your best search tool. They can be found at public libraries. The Adoption Reunion Registry currently stores some older city directories as well. Most larger centers have published their own city directories. Do not confuse city directories with criss-cross directories which record telephone numbers only. Remember that the information was compiled approximately one year before publication, so if you are looking for information from 1954, refer to a 1955 directory.

People are listed in alphabetical order by surnames at the front of the book. Also included are their first names, possible middle initial, address, occupation and whether they are the head of the household or residing there with someone else. You can determine family members by matching surnames with addresses.

Refer to the back of the book (in the address section) to establish whether they were a homeowner or renter, their phone number and who their neighbours were during that period. If there are no direct leads to the birth family, next-door neighbours found in the city directories may be an important source of information. This section will also list local businesses that may have had dealings with the people you are looking for. For example, if the adoption file indicated that birth mother was an avid bowler, you may be able to contact the local bowling alley for old records, leagues, awards and "gossip". Since the adoption file usually contains birth mother's ethnic origin and religion, you can contact the closest place of worship or cultural center for additional clues.

Some city directories contain an additional section referred to as "crisscross listings". This allows you to cross-reference telephone numbers with addresses. It also reveals how a party had their phone listed (i.e., "Bradley Thomas Smith" in the front shows up as "Brad T" in the back). This type of information is helpful when trying to establish how he may be listed in the phone book today.

### **Microfilms**

Local libraries hold microfilms of newspapers. These can provide you with obituary notices which often indicate the next-of-kin, names of pall-bearers and other details concerning the deceased (i.e., "long standing member of the Rotary Club"; "donations to the Cancer Society"; "survived by sister, Mrs. Jane Smith, niece Mary Doe....."). Birth announcements will often disclose other family members' names. Newsworthy items relating to the family you are searching for can also be found by searching old newspapers.

### **Archives**

The BC Provincial Archives (in Victoria) have copies of Death Certificates (more than 25 years old), Marriage Certificates (more than 75 years old) and Birth Certificates (over 100 years old), newspapers from smaller towns around BC, and probate and coroner's reports. They can be reached at: 250 387-5885. BC Archives also has an Internet site ([www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca)). You can also access archival information through electronic libraries (i.e., National Library of Canada: <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/index-e.html>)

Family history centres are a great source of historical information and are the primary source used by people tracing their roots. Each province has a Provincial Archives. Please check government listings in your local phonebook to access this source. Provincial Archives are a wealth of information.

Good genealogical libraries have also been set up by the Mormon Church (LDS). Contact the central office in Salt Lake City, Utah for their website address and telephone listing of the chapter closest to you. This source can be particularly helpful if you have to search outside North America.

### **Churches and Graveyards**

Often, Vital Statistics will not allow you to access information due to the Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act. You may want to turn your sights elsewhere. Church records can be a goldmine for the novice searcher. Births, deaths and marriages are all recorded in the local parish and these records can be more readily accessed. They may also provide more detail than government records. For example, Baptismal Records will give you additional names, including God Parents and other records pertaining to the same family. Check the denomination recorded on the OBR and adoption file. This will tell you where

to begin your search. Keep in mind, descendants of past parishioners may still be members of the church today and may be located through church records.

Cemeteries are another source of information. Family members are often buried side by side, which can provide you with additional names. Plots can also be reserved by other family members who are still living - check with the caretaker of the cemetery. Old cemetery records also provide a contact person's name and address (usually next of kin) at the time of death along with the funeral home that took care of the arrangements. When a date of death is established, refer to the obituaries in the local newspaper (see [Microfilms](#)).

## **Internet Sources**

The Internet is an ever-changing, ever-expanding resource. An experienced "surfer" will feel comfortable using search engines to explore the many sites that relate to adoption and searching. A novice Internet user may find the whole prospect overwhelming and may find themselves staring blankly at the screen wondering, "where do I start?"

So, where do you start? One option is to find an experienced surfer to do the work for you. The other is to learn to navigate the net on your own. Some helpful places to start include telephone listings. Canada 411 ([www.Canada411.ca](http://www.Canada411.ca)) is like a phone book on the computer. Punch in a last name and all the phone numbers attached to that name throughout Canada (excluding Alberta and Saskatchewan) will show up. Know the city or province? Add that and your list of names becomes smaller (but please remember...don't immediately pick up the phone and start dialing...there's more to it than that!)

Almost every province in Canada has some type of site which can provide you with useful ideas for searching. There are numerous U.S. sites as well. Before you sign up for anything though, make sure you check it out very, very carefully. A site that encourages you to sign up on its registry for only \$19.95, is not very useful if only 500 people worldwide are on it (although it's an easy ten grand for the site operator!). Even more reputable sites need to be checked out carefully. How helpful is it to sign up on a US registry? Is the other person going to be looking for you there?

Once you have found a site that looks interesting, remember to check for "links" (most sites have them). Links are invaluable because they allow you to springboard from one site to another. They can often help you become more focused. If you find an interesting site, remember to bookmark it...if not, you may not find your way back to it!

If you would like a starting place, use the links on our site to springboard to others. You may also want to check with your local library or bookstore for directories and manuals on Internet sites.

## Armed Forces

If there is reason to believe that a family member were to have been in the Canadian Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force), it would be useful to check the following:

- National Archives of Canada: They will forward mail if they can identify a record and a current address. They can be contacted at 613 954-4145.
- Department of Veterans' Affairs: In the event that a family member is a war veteran, they would be receiving a pension from this source until their death. Upon their death, their widow would continue to receive a pension. The Department will forward mail to the pension recipient. They can be contacted at:

Access to Information and Privacy Coordinator's Office,  
Veterans Affairs Canada,  
PO Box 7700,  
Charlottetown, PEI C1A 8M9

Be sure to give as much information as you can to identify the person you are looking for. Whenever possible, it is helpful to provide the Coordinator with a name, date of birth, regiment, military service numbers, place where he lived, place where he was discharged. In your cover letter sent to the Coordinator's office, explain the reason you wish to locate this veteran. One letter only will be sent to the veteran by registered mail. It is the veteran's decision whether or not to contact the requester.

Should the veteran be deceased, the Coordinator will inform you and give you the date of death. If the death occurred more than 20 years ago, you can obtain additional information by completing and sending an Access to Information form and \$5 to the Coordinator. They will review the veteran's record and provide you with details therein. An Access to Information form can be obtained at any public library.

- Base Locators: Those currently in service can be located by contacting: Canadian Armed Forces Base Locator (613) 992-5618. In the United States, you may contact the Military Locator at 512 652-5775.
- Royal Canadian Legion: Information can be obtained from their membership roster by calling the central index in Ottawa at 613 235-4391.

## **Correctional Services**

If you have a reason to believe the person you are searching for is incarcerated, correctional facilities may forward a letter to someone who is incarcerated. They will not give out information about the reason for incarceration. Check both federal and provincial listings as these are separate. Both can be found in the blue pages of the telephone directory ("Correctional Services of Canada" for federal and "Attorney General, Corrections Branch" for provincial).

In certain circumstances, it may be helpful to know that a Certified Copy of Conviction may be obtained for a nominal fee from your local Justice of the Peace (at the court house).

## **Doctors/Hospitals/Lawyers**

These sources are generally of little use. Records are usually purged after 20 years. However, do not overlook the possibility of some additional information being gleaned via these sources.

## **Sources in Small Communities**

Often, just like on TV, there is usually one person who knows everybody else's business and is more than happy to share the information. You can often find this person by calling the Post Office, general store, school house, or senior centre in the community. Remember, discretion is imperative!

## **Creating Leads**

What happens when there is no place left to go and you think you have exhausted all leads? Take heart....you can create a new one. It demands a good measure of creative thinking and one may prefer to consult with a professional searcher (or skip-tracer) at this stage.

A simple example would be, when using a city directory, note and contact neighbours on either side of the person you are searching for. They may provide information as to what city or town the subject has moved to, which school the children attended, names and ages, and any professional or recreational affiliations the family may have had. Remember, no one leaves this earth without leaving a trail.

## **Making Telephone Calls**

Making phone calls is far more complex than it appears. Beware of the "Humpty Dumpty Effect" - if by virtue of poor telephone etiquette or lack of expertise you blow the contact/source, it may be that you can never get it back. To professional searchers, telephone calls are an art form that take years to perfect. As a novice searcher, you need to be very aware of the pitfalls in making telephone contact. For example, providing too much information may merely generate questions, as will providing too little. You need to sound confident, capable, calm, and friendly. Remember, your contact should never become an adversary.

### **Important Tips**

When making phone calls, it is very important to keep the following in mind:

- Record everything you are told. "Doodle the details" during the call - you will be glad you did after you hang up.
- Be polite - people are much more willing to provide information when you "ask" rather than demand.
- Check beforehand what name the person goes by - do they go by "Robert" or "Bob"?
- Before you pick up the phone, think ahead. What is the purpose of the call? What information do they have that may be useful to me? Am I comfortable leaving my name and telephone number with this person and/or to be passed on? How much information am I prepared to divulge?
- Be prepared for a phone call to lead to direct contact. You may think you are reaching a distant aunt, only to find out your birth mother is visiting for coffee!
- Think ahead to how you will start the call. You need to enlist the other person to engage in conversation with you.
- When you contact an employer, do not limit yourself to the personnel office. You may want to make a second call to the department where the person worked.
- Try to stay in control of where the conversation is going and not divulge unnecessary details. Remember the purpose of the call is to generate information not questions. A good searcher will get the information they need without releasing many details (if any).

- If the person you call does not have the information you need, ask them if it is okay if you check back with them at a later date, should you have further questions or to see if they have any further recollection of the events. If this person is unable to provide you with any information, be sure to ask if they know who else may be able to assist you.

Think carefully before making calls to family members. People often start their search by calling every person with the same last name. This is not only time consuming and will likely lead to a lot of wrong connections (not to mention a big phone bill) - it is also one of the last things that you should do. Proper research can narrow the field down, prior to making any phone calls to potential family members.

If you decide to make family calls, it is extremely important to be discreet. Many adoptee's and birth parents have not told others of the adoption. Hearing this information from you may jeopardize your reunion. On the other-hand, the family may know and be entirely supportive. Since you have no way of knowing, it is important to error on the side of caution.

## **Things to Think About Before Making Contact**

**Before** you make contact with your birth relative, it is important to consider what the possible outcomes might be and to determine whether you feel ready to take the next step. For example, you may discover that:

- The person you are seeking is deceased or may be mentally incapacitated and unable to make a decision around contact.
- They may refuse to acknowledge that they are the correct person. For example, a birth father may not believe that he is your birth father or may know, but still deny it. A birth mother may "panic" and say she is the wrong person.
- Your birth relative may not feel able to have contact because of family situations, overwhelming emotions or a number of other personal reasons.
- What you find may not be what you expect. Issues such as substance abuse, mental illness, poor social skills can be influential factors.
- Your birth relative(s) may want more intense/frequent contact than you, which may catch you off guard and feel overwhelming.
- The person may need time to decide whether they are open to contact or not.

You may also want to consider the following:

### **Preparation**

As much as you think you are prepared, there are always things you cannot anticipate as you go into reunion. While it can be helpful to be aware of the many issues that might come up, there comes a point where you need to simply trust that you can handle whatever might arise.

Remember that people can be at very different stages at the beginning of contact. The person who has been searched for is often quite shocked and may need time for the news to settle in. The person who has initiated the search may need to remind themselves that they have had more time to prepare and they may need to be patient. The ball is now in the "searched for" person's court and that person may need time to sort through a number of feelings and issues associated with being contacted.

### **Timing**

In many cases, the whole process and experience of reunion takes up a lot of an individual's emotional energy. Timing is very important. You need to know that you have the support, stability and energy to deal with whatever may come up.

### **Honesty**

Honesty is very important. Throughout the reunion process, it is helpful to be clear about what you need and do not need, what makes you comfortable or not. Being clear and honest leaves less room for miscommunication. It also helps the other person to have more of an understanding of where you are coming from. Remember: You can't play cards without the cards on the table and without knowing the rules.

### **Intentions**

What are yours? In the excitement and drive to satisfy a burning need within you, it is easy to lose sight of the feelings and needs of the other person. Yet, it is very important that you do consider the other person. Your needs and expectations may be very similar or very different from theirs. Some may see the reunion as an opportunity to establish a deep relationship, others may simply want to exchange information, find out how the other person is doing, and connect once or twice a year. Being upfront with each other is very important. You may also want to remind yourself that feelings change. What is negotiated at the beginning may change later, so it is often helpful to check in with each other at various points in the reunion.

## **Communication**

In some ways, a reunion relationship is like any other relationship, but in other ways, it is unlike anything you have experienced before. Reunions are new and uncharted territory. There are no rules and no road maps – and it can be quite unnerving, starting a journey without a point of reference. This makes communication all the more important. The two of you may be similar in many ways, but you are also separate individuals. You may have different life experiences, beliefs and values, communication styles, conflict resolution skills, etc. Like all relationships, clear and open communication is vital.

## **Flexibility/Adaptability**

It is likely that whatever you imagined the other person to be like, there will also be many surprises. It is wise to keep an open mind, remain optimistic, and be prepared to "roll with the punches".

## **Support System**

It is important to ensure that you have the necessary supports in place, to address issues that will likely emerge throughout the search and reunion process. Support needs vary from person to person. While one may feel comfortable proceeding with the solid support of one or two people, another may need a wider support system that includes an adoption reunion support group, counsellor, family members, friends, etc. Some may prefer the support of those also touched by adoption, while others may want input from someone who is not a part of the adoption constellation. For more information, go to "[Where to go for support](#)".

## **How Do I Contact Them?**

Once you feel ready to proceed with contact, you need to decide what is the most comfortable and respectful way of contacting the other person. Showing up on someone's doorstep with a dozen roses may work in the movies, but quite likely will NOT work in real life.

There are a number of different options. Some will find a middle person who will act as an "intermediary" in contacting the other party. This intermediary can be a trusted friend, priest/pastor, counsellor, mediator, lawyer, etc.

Others prefer to make contact on their own, either by phone or by letter. Think this through carefully.

- If you are thinking of phoning, ask yourself: Would this be too shocking for the other person? What if others are around and they cannot talk openly? Will I give them my phone number and/or address if they need time? What will I say? Is this respectful?
- If you are thinking of writing a letter, ask yourself: Do I feel comfortable giving out my name and address to someone I know little about? Is it safe? What if they need time to respond and my address changes? What do I write in the letter? What will I do if they do not respond? What feels respectful?

Another option is to use the Adoption Reunion Registry's Passive Registry. You (or your chosen intermediary) can let the other party know that you have registered on the Passive Registry and if they are interested in having contact with you, they too can register. This option provides professional intermediary and support services. It also allows each of you to slow down the pace and only release your full name and address when you both feel ready.

## **Once Contact is Made**

There are many, many factors that will influence the possibility of a reunion happening, and when it happens. These factors also influence the smoothness, intensity, or character of adoption reunion experiences and relationships after reunion. Although it is impossible to list all of them, as each situation is quite unique, there are some factors that stand out as being significant.

### **Readiness and Mutuality**

If both adopted adult and birth parent are ready and eager to get to know each other, contact with one another can be easier. This usually means that both parties have done a lot of the "work" necessary to come to terms with their personal issues around the adoption experience.

### **Current Personal Circumstances**

What is currently happening in each person's life can influence if and how a reunion progresses. If either party has just married, had a child, started a new career, just experienced a considerable loss, etc., he/she may not be able to devote the energy to a reunion, or may become overwhelmed from having taken on too big a load. There may be a need to put new relationships on hold for a while.

## **Time**

Time is calming. Sometimes it is necessary to give oneself time to just get used to new ideas and feelings. Even when there are not particularly difficult obstacles to overcome, people may just need to "digest" the news for a while.

## **Age and Gender of Reunion Members**

Where each person is in their life cycle has a bearing on how they handle intense feelings, if they are able and willing to form new relationships, and how they go about the process of getting to know each other. Very elderly people can be less likely to take on something new and difficult. Very young adoptee's may be still very much immersed in their adoptive families and cannot conceive of taking on additional family responsibilities. Men and women often respond quite differently to the same event.

## **Reactions of Important People**

The feelings and reactions of each person's family and friends can influence a reunion. No one wishes to jeopardize their current relationships. If there is a great deal of distress created for an important person, the reunion may have to be slowed down and those issues addressed. If a birth mother's family does not know about an adoptee, or if an adoptee did not know they were adopted, it will likely take much more time for a reunion to proceed.

## **The Intensity of Emotions**

Reunions usually bring up a lot of intense feelings from the past - often long hidden. Sometimes there are deep scars that are very painful to open up again. For most people, the possibility of healing those wounds helps them face the more difficult aspects of cutting through the pain of the past. Some people, however, feel they cannot take the chance of opening those doors again.

## Where to Go for Support

The Adoption Reunion Registry is only able to provide support and brief counselling services to those registered with us. We encourage you to contact resources within your community for search and reunion support. Listed below are three contacts who may know of search/reunion support groups within your area:

**Forget Me Not Family Society (Adoption Circles)**

1047 - 250A Street

Aldergrove, BC V4W 2S8

Phone: 604 777-2920, Fax: 604 857-2177

Web Site: <http://www.adoptioncircles.net/cms2/index.php>

Email: [katosan@telus.net](mailto:katosan@telus.net)

**Parent Finders of Canada**

19 English Bluff Rd.

Delta, BC V4M 2M4

Tel: 604 948-1069, Fax: 604 948-2036

Website: <http://www.parentfinders.org>

Email: [jvanstone@dccnet.com](mailto:jvanstone@dccnet.com)

**Triad Society for Truth in Adoption of Canada (National Office)**

PO Box 5922, Stn. B.,

Victoria, BC V8S 4S

Phone: 250 385-7884, Fax: 250 361-9424

You may also want to contact local counselling agencies and/or private therapists for reunion support and/or to work through adoption/relinquishment issues. Since not all counsellors are familiar with these issues, it is important to find a counsellor who you feel comfortable working with. There are a number of books about reunions, relinquishment issues and adoption experiences which may be helpful. A few include:

**Adoption Reunions: A Book for Adoptees, Birth Parents and Adoptive Families.** McColm, Michelle. Toronto, ON: Second Story Press, 1993.

**The Adoption Triangle. Sealed or Open Records: How They Affect Adoptees, Birth Parents and Adoptive Parents.** Sorosky, Arthur, Baran, Annette and Pannor, Rueben. San Antonio, TX: Corona Publishing Company, 1978.

**Adoption Wisdom: A Guide to the Issues and Feelings of Adoption.** Russell, Marlou. CA:Broken Branch Productions, 1996.

**BirthBond: Reunions Between Birthparents and Adoptees; What Happens After.** Gediman, Judith and Brown, Linda. New Jersey: New Horizon Press, 1989.

**Birth Mothers: Women Who Relinquished babies for Adoption Tell Their Stories.** Bloch Jones, Merry. Chicago Review press, 1993.

**"Dear Mum, I Found My Birth Mother": An Adoptive Parents Guide to the Scariest Thing in the World".** Moses, Susan. Jungle Publishing - call 206 742-4225.

**Out of the Shadows: Birth Fathers' Stories.** Martin Mason, Mary. Edina, MN: O.J. Howard Publishing, 1995.

**Journey of the Adopted Self: A Quest for Wholeness.** Betty Jean Lifton. 1995

**Lost and Found: The Adoption Experience.** Betty Jean Lifton 1988

## **Appendix**

Each province has separate legislation pertaining to adoption. You will need to [contact the province](#) where the adoption was finalized.