

## Focus Group Work Plan for 2024

Name of Focus Group **Adoption and Foster Care (AFC)**

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Chair/Co-chairs **Drs. Rachel Farr and Cheryl Fortner**

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Chair/Co-chairs email [rachel.farr@uky.edu](mailto:rachel.farr@uky.edu) and [fortnerc@winthrop.edu](mailto:fortnerc@winthrop.edu)

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1. Do you wish to have a time allocated for your focus group during at the next NCFR Annual Conference?

Yes  No

2. If Yes, please list or attach tentative agenda.

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Our agenda items include: Introductions, Interest Areas, NCFR 2024 feedback, NCFR 2025 Proposal Ideas, Publishing and Disseminating our Research and Practice in AFC, Networking & Open Discussion (see meeting minutes below that reflect this past year's agenda)

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3. Please list 2024 focus group goals/projects/aspirations.

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Continue to: Collaborate to create AFC symposia/sessions for the 2024 NCFR conference; Include and involve people, experiences, and perspectives that are underrepresented in scholarly AFC discourse; Retain, add, and engage members in this focus group by providing a place and mechanism for NCFR members and conference attendees with professional and/or personal AFC interests to network, listen, and be heard; Keep AFC-related issues on the forefront for NCFR and its members; Work with NCFR staff and leadership to maintain current AFC-related events and issues in NCFR communications and our discussion board/forum.

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4. Please identify any opportunities, suggestions, or concerns regarding the role of this focus group in furthering NCFR's inclusion and diversity initiatives.

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Every year, NCFR staff and the conference committee provide tools and events for our members to share relevant and timely information; present new research findings; discuss policy updates and implications; and network to promote, advocate for, and further understanding of the experiences of adoptive and foster families representing diverse backgrounds. The 2024 NCFR conference theme, *Building Resilience Among Individuals, Families, and Communities*, is closely tied to the work of current and prospective AFC Focus Group members and encourages us to continue to intentionally represent topics focused on DEI issues in realms of AFC, such as racial/ethnic identity and socialization in multiracial adoptive families and intersections with additional identities, social locations, and contexts. Furthermore, during our November 2023 meeting, members recommended we contact and work to include individuals with AFC lived experience and professionals who live in the Bellevue, WA area.

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5. Please list any areas where you would like assistance from NCFR staff.

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We'd love to see at least one educational (perhaps for credit) and/or at least one special invited speaker with AFC emphases. Can NCFR staff help coordinate these sessions? We also want to thank NCFR for the support our focus group and membership receives. And we are grateful for the outstanding technical support during our focus group meeting. We appreciated the opportunity to offer in-person and Zoom access to the Focus Group meeting and hope we can do that again in 2024. Also, although there will always be schedule conflicts for some attendees, we found the midday time slot we had this year allowed many folks to join us. Additionally, having the Newcomer's reception the day before our Focus Group meeting helped us recruit new members.

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6. Are there any other concerns or questions that have come from the 2023 focus group annual meeting?

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Are there NCFR resources (e.g., conference registration waivers) to help us include non-NCFR members who represent the diverse AFC perspectives mentioned in #4, without charging them to enrich our knowledge and conference experience?

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Attach your **2023 annual meeting minutes** to this form and return by **Thursday December 1, 2023** to [membership@ncfr.org](mailto:membership@ncfr.org)

# NCFR 2023 Adoption & Foster Care (AFC) Focus Group

## Meeting Minutes

*Cheryl A. Fortner & Rachel H. Farr, Co-Chairs*

### I. Introductions

- a. Name, affiliation, any personal/professional connections to topics of adoption and foster care (AFC) that you are willing to share; See Sign-in sheet for details:  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1A0ybILLy12NHPP2ABVG4r4xJIZDwLMPHy5oL4duwWeU/edit?usp=sharing>

Attendees and members with scheduling conflicts who expressed interest\*

1. Cheryl Fortner
2. Melissa Lovitz
3. Janis Henderson\*
4. John Sheetz
5. Paige Johnston
6. Elizabeth Wroten
7. Rachel Farr
8. Emily Lapidus
9. Armeda Wojciak
10. Selena Garrison
11. Reihonna Frost-Calhoun
12. Katie Hrapczynski
13. Kristine Posada
14. Evin Richardson
15. Jacquelyn Mallette
16. Bethany Willis
17. Cassidy crunkilton
18. Lea Silvert
19. Martie Gillen\*
20. Morgan Cooley\*

- b. Emails: If you are not already on our email list, let us know if would like to be added to our focus group discussion board.

### II. Discuss areas of interest among attendees and what attendees would like to see with regards to topics of AFC at [next NCFR conference](#) (and related to 2024 theme), including discussion of “hot topics in adoption and foster care”

- a. NCFR 2024 Theme - *Building Resilience Among Individuals, Families, and Communities* and NCFR 2024 Conference location - Bellevue, WA and Conference Program Chair: Karina M. Shreffler, Ph.D. (Nov 20-24)

Ethics in foster care, in being a foster parent (raised by Melissa Lovitz)

– several shared about ethical decision-making, confidentiality, Katie Hrapczynski noted about dynamics of information sharing with children and access and consent (what do they need to have? Should have? etc.); Cheryl shared about Morgan Cooley’s comfort calls work that she presented on yesterday in the birth relatives symposium (11/8/23)

– foster care among indigenous communities (represented at this year's 2023 conference) - could we collaborate / connect with some of these scholars?

### III. Brainstorm ideas for organizing joint symposia / conference proposals for 2024 (with lots of opportunity to be involved and/or take leading roles!)

John Sheetz - familism, it would be interesting to see research about how foster/adoptive parents that are high (or low) on familism incorporate youth who are on the other end of the spectrum; preparing youth transitioning/aging out of foster care

Reihonna - siblings, adult adopted individuals, perhaps a symposium on aging out (and supports & strengths), parenting, program evaluation

Amplify voices of former foster youth and those with lived experience - research, panels, speakers, etc.

–idea: perhaps look into groups *in* Washington state!

Rachel asked about whether others in the room (or know of people) who are doing community-engaged work, advisory boards, etc., with foster care youth / alum?

– Selena in FL - yes! Youth advisors - foster youth

Armeda (MN) - in the process of doing so (setting up a similar youth/community advisory board)!

Selena - TIP and preparing people and communities to engage in effective trauma-informed foster care

Rachel - adopted people as parents; how adopted youth think about future parenthood (would Abbie Goldberg also have some data on these topics? I mentioned Krystal Cashen and Hal Grotevant with MTARP data) – a few (like Cheryl/Katie/Bethany, Reihonna, Selena) have a couple of participants who fit these identities in their studies

NOTE: Cheryl and Rachel will follow up early in the new year to solicit interest and to make connections re: conference submissions, organizing symposia, etc. for NCFR 2024!

### IV. Publishing and disseminating our research / practice in AFC

a. Working to publish the results our focus group has organized and presented via symposium at NCFR conferences - remember this is an option that our focus group can help with - we want to dynamically support our members' needs, so feel free to reach out, use our discussion board, etc.

b. Consider submitting to Theory Construction & Research Methodology (TCRM) pre-conference at NCFR 2024 or TCRM 2025 (Bethany chaired this year, 2023!)

c. Broad discussion about strategies for collaboration and success - use us as a resource!

d. Ongoing recruitment for Katie/Cheryl/Bethany's study! Can we help spread the word?

e. MTARP: <https://www.umass.edu/ruddchair/research/mtarp> Will be coming to UK! (Rachel will be new PI after Drs. Hal Grotevant and Ruth McRoy)

## V. Networking and open discussion

- a. News items related to AFC, “what’s on the horizon” in our field
  - Katie H. shared about a job posting at Towson!
- b. Announcements of AFC-related conferences/events that attendees might have interest in
  - CONFERENCE: ICAR-8 is in Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 8-12, 2024!  
Abstract Submission and Registration websites for ICAR-8 are available here:  
<https://icar8.umn.edu/>.  
Abstracts will be accepted through 11:59 pm CST on Friday, January 19, 2024.
- c. Sharing of other relevant resources related to AFC including articles and books – let’s keep using our discussion board to do so in an ongoing way!