

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

| Keep — one-page takeaway

Scope note: this territory has a literature written largely by the adoptees inside it, and it does not fit in one lesson. Treat this as orientation. Expect to read further, seek consultation, and consider referral or co-treatment.

What's specifically intercountry

- **Country loss.** Born in one country, raised in another. Often not at home in either, in the specific way the between-cultures experience describes.
- **Language loss.** Usually no fluency in the birth language. Adult learning is meaningful and doesn't recover childhood acquisition. Grief surfaces at contact with biological family, at documents, at references needing translation.
- **Culture as curriculum.** Heritage camps and language study can be meaningful and can simultaneously mark difference. Expect appreciation and complexity together.
- **Cultural erasure.** Replaced birth names, being told to forget the language, birth culture treated as trivia. The cumulative effect is clinical material.
- **Age at placement.** Older-age placement means actual memory, and a sudden discontinuity in language, environment, and relationships the child couldn't process at the time.
- **Placement-era discovery.** Falsified paperwork, questionable consent, trafficking. Learning this in adulthood changes the conditions of the story, usually without resolving them. The uncertainty is often the material.

In the room

- When placement-era material lands, slow the work down. Self-directed research often outruns the client's capacity to absorb it.
- Name that the conditions of their story have changed. Don't rush to what they should do about it.
- The adoptee community for their specific country of origin is often the most useful referral available.
- Most of Lesson 6.1 applies here as well for intercountry adoptees of color in white families.

Continued considerations

- What do you actually know about the placement-era practices of the countries your clients came from?
- How would you sit with a client whose central question can never be answered?
- Sit with this: what does it mean to lose a language you can't remember speaking?