



making families happen

The Importance of Completing Your Child's Canadian Citizenship!

Many of us in Canada and around the world have watched in horror as Adam Crapser was deported from the USA to South Korea. The system and his adoptive parents have failed this young man, and he is now stateless.



Man adopted from South Korea and brought to America as a toddler, deported back 38 years later

ANDREW SELSKY, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS 11/17/2016 |



<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/world/adopted+from+south+korea+brought+america+toddler+deported+back/12400820/story.html>

The New York Times

Korean Mother Awaits a Son's Deportation to Confess Her 'Unforgivable Sin'

By CHOE SANG-HUN NOV. 16, 2016



Kwon Pil-ju, the biological mother of Adam Crapser, at home in Yeongju, South Korea.
Joan Chung for The New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/17/world/asia/korea-adoption-adam-crapser.html? r=1>

LOVE

Will Not Be Enough



I was told by our social worker when we were completing our homestudy "love will not be enough," and that we had to be prepared to do much more work if we were adopting a child of another race or a child with special needs. I listened carefully, and was a little bit shocked that they thought they could tell us that what we had to offer as a family wasn't enough! I wasn't yet ready to truly understand this message.

I guess I just assumed that since we would love our son or daughter unconditionally that we would be able to conquer any obstacles that lay in our path.

I had no idea how parenting a child of another race and a child with special needs would completely challenge everything we had ever known. I did not know we would require a village to raise our handsome boy with special needs who was initially presented as active and engaging. We did not know he would go on to challenge every value we held dear as he challenged our family norms through his own growth and development.

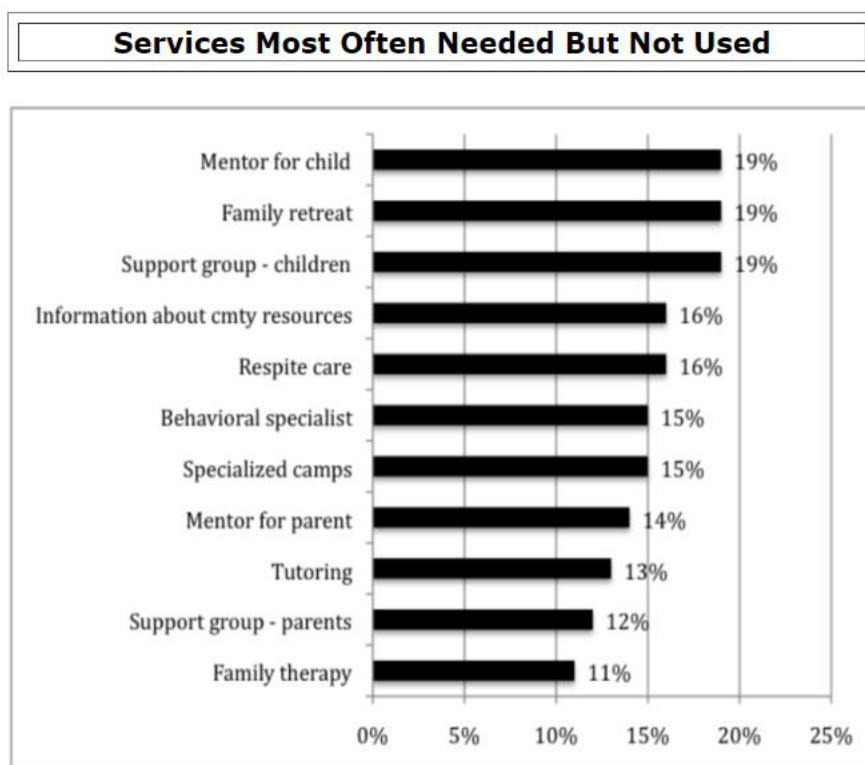
I did not yet understand how important mentors would be to our daughter's sense of self and to her identity. I underestimated the importance of Homeland Visits until we saw the Homeland Visit through our daughter's eyes. I did not fully understand that adoption is a journey for every member of the adoptive family and where we begin is not where we will land on this wonderful journey. I did not understand how enriched our lives would become and how much we would all grow as individuals and as a family. Our social worker was correct - Love Will Not Be Enough on those really challenging days you will have to dig deeper and push yourself and your family into uncharted territory to truly meet the needs of each individual child - but the rewards are many and if you can remain open and flexible your family will grow in ways you never thought possible!

NACAC Post Adoption Services Results from 2010:

<https://www.nacac.org/adoptalk/postadoptionsurvey.html>

What services did parents need but not use? See the chart below for details:

- mentor for child (19 percent)
- family retreat (19 percent)
- support group for child (19 percent)
- community resource information (16 percent)
- respite care (16 percent)



Parents identified four top barriers to accessing these and other services:

- inability to find needed services (43 percent)
- providers who don't understand adoption (39 percent)
- services that cost too much (33 percent)
- providers who don't accept Medicaid (30 percent)
- On a more positive note, close to a third of parents (29 percent) reported that they encountered no barriers to accessing services.

What Helps

When asked to assess services they used, parents rated as most useful adoption subsidies (64 percent) and advice and support from more experienced adoptive parents (almost 64 percent). Other top supports were medical care (54 percent), training and education (53 percent), online groups (47 percent), and newsletters (41 percent).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

NACAC CONTINUED...

Parent feedback also revealed recurring themes about positive practices and approaches. For example, many parents suggested these actions:

Encourage all adoption and child welfare professionals to receive in-depth training on attachment and mental health issues and treatments.

Take the stigma out of asking for help.

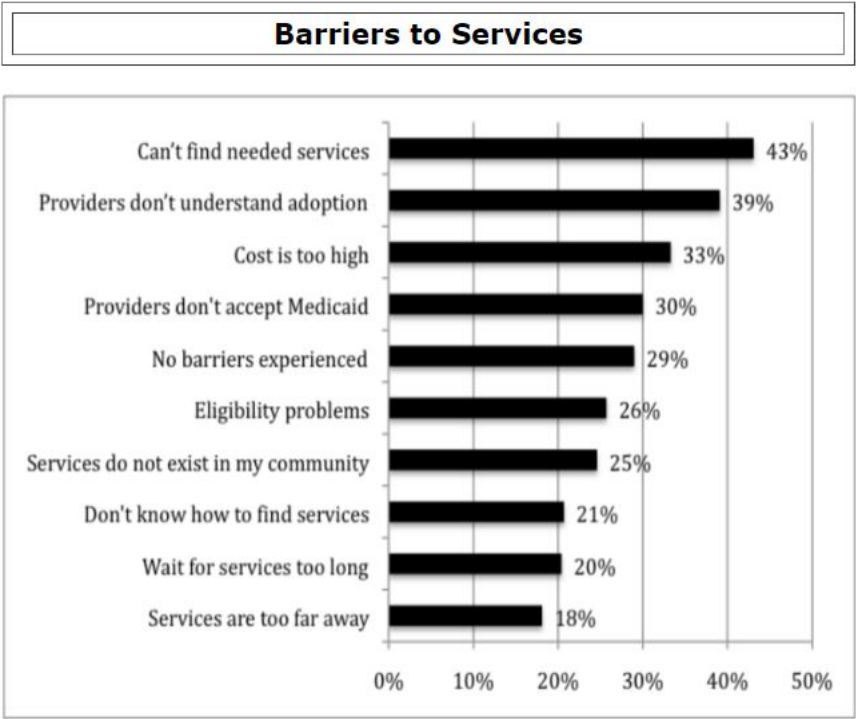
Spend time with other families who share the same experiences; contact can normalize issues families face every day.

Make information and resources easily accessible for parents.

Recommendations

To help guide our advocacy efforts, NACAC asked parents to rank the top four issues that we should address in the future. The results fall right in line with what we have been working on, with the following most often top rated:

- adoption competency training
- mental health services
- training and education for parents
- educational advocacy and support



Visual Stress is a neurological condition, triggered by lights, patterns, contrast and/or colour. This sensitivity to visual stimuli causes the visual cortex to become hyper-activated, leading to physical discomfort and perceptual distortions. Symptoms include: light sensitivity, physical discomfort, general health issues, eye pain or strain, fatigue, and or nausea. Perceptual distortions of Visual Stress include illusions of light and colour, instability of text, lines or patterns, and depth perception difficulties.

VISUAL STRESS

Reading difficulties, headaches, light sensitivity or visual perceptual distortions... Could it be VISUAL STRESS?

Content for this article reprinted with permission from:

www.ementalhealth.ca - Mental Health Services, Help and Support in Your Community

<http://www.ementalhealth.ca/Ottawa-Carleton/Visual-Stress-Information-for-Patients-and-Families/index.php?m=article&ID=51818>

www.opticalm.ca - Opticalm Visual Stress Solutions

Assistive technology and tools for learning difficulties, migraines and other neurological differences

Visual stress is a visual perceptual processing condition that results from hyperactivity of the brain's visual cortex. As a result, the visual cortex doesn't process information properly, which can thereby cause problems with reading, attention, coordination, general health and behaviour.

Visual stress is not the same as problems involving sight or sharpness of vision; visual stress can occur even if you have normal vision.

Symptoms include:

- Light sensitivity
- Physical discomfort
- Visual and perceptual distortions.

Classic symptoms include light sensitivity, headaches from reading, and problems reading because the white "page appears too bright" or the words appear to be "moving, flashing, or jumping on the page". As reading is such a key skill for school and life in general, problems with reading can thus lead to significant impairment. The good news is that appropriate intervention can make a significant improvement and for many individuals, one of the interventions is as simple as specific colour filters.

Visual stress can mimic other conditions

Visual stress is often not picked up in standard optometric, psychological or health exams, and is often overlooked as the cause (or part of the cause) of the person's problems.

As well, many of the symptoms are similar to those of other conditions and may be misinterpreted as other conditions including, but not limited to:

- **Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD):** Because the person has trouble looking at things due to visual stress, it may appear that the person has a lack of attention.
- **Dyslexia** (aka Reading Disorder): Because the person has troubles looking at text and reading in particular, it can be diagnosed as a 'reading disorder'. Interestingly enough, many teachers know from experience that some students are helped by colored overlays, but don't realize they have visual stress.
- **Coordination disorders:** Because the person may be clumsy from not seeing properly, it can be mistaken for coordination problems.

Could it be visual stress? Is there any of the following?

- Do words or letters appear to jump, shake, change or move on a page?
- Do colours or lights appear to flash or flicker on the page and behind text?
- Do you struggle with headaches/migraines or eyestrain from reading, homework, computer work or fluorescent lighting?
- Have you, or a loved one, been diagnosed with ADHD, Autism, Asperger Syndrome, or Dyslexia?
- Have there been perceptual distortions that often following a stroke, concussion or other brain injury?

If there are even a few of these symptoms, then there is a possibility that there may be visual stress, a condition that occurs in as many as 15% of the population. And for many, a part of the solution is as simple as precision colour filters. *In certain individuals such as those with dyslexia, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), specific learning difficulties, migraines, and brain injuries, visual stress can occur in over 40%.*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Common Visual Distortions

The images below are an example of how the distortions appear to those with visual stress (note that distortions can also appear in the environment (colored "globes" appearing in a blue sky, glowing lights around shapes/people...)

Visual stress is the experience of unpleasant visual symptoms when reading and also in some other visual activities. Symptoms include illusions of shape, movement and colour in the text, distortions of the print, loss of print clarity, and a general visual irritation. In the long term visual stress can result in some eyes, headaches, frequent loss of place when reading and impaired comprehension. Research has shown that up to 29% of children and adults suffer from some degree of visual stress, which makes it more difficult to achieve good reading fluency. Although younger children are not necessarily very good at describing the symptoms they experience, older children and adults often report a variety of symptoms. Evans and Joseph (2002) studied a selected sample of 100 university students, of whom many reported visual perceptual distortions when reading. For example, 24% reported blurring of text, 10% doubling; 12% jumping; 6% changing size

Visual Stress is a neurological condition, triggered by lights, patterns, contrast and/or colour. This sensitivity to visual stimuli causes the visual cortex to become hyper-activated, leading to physical discomfort and perceptual distortions that interfere with reading, attention, coordination and general health and behaviour. Physical symptoms of Visual Stress include headaches, eye pain or strain, fatigue, and or nausea. Perceptual symptoms of Visual Stress include illusions of light and colour, instability of text, lines or patterns, and depth perception difficulties.

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Letters rotate or flash
Words rock, shake, or reverse.
Print is blurry and swirling
Words shift creating rivers of white.
Words clump together
Text falls off the page
Colours appear behind the text.
Lights flash behind words

Writing clearly or straight is difficult.
Copying off the board is difficult
Music notes move up or down the lines
Spreadsheets and tables warp

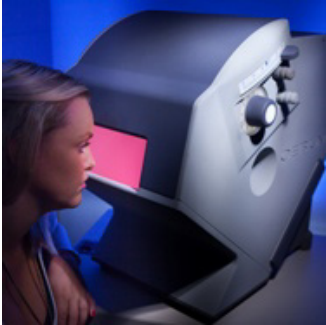
...But it all stops with the right colour filter

If you suffer from any of these difficulties, it is important to investigate whether or not you have Visual Stress.

The good news is that there are many strategies and interventions that can be done for visual stress, depending on the specific circumstance. Coloured filters (lenses/overlays) have been shown to reduce the effects of these stimuli, calming the stress and restoring brain function.

When screening for visual stress, a specific pattern glare test is used to identify individuals who have a high neurological sensitivity to images and who may be good candidates for relief through colour.

If you suspect problems with visual stress, consider seeing an eye care professional (such as an optometrist or ophthalmologist familiar with visual stress), and/or a professional who has training in the area of visual stress. **Note that because awareness of visual stress is still in its early stages,** it is possible that even if you see an eye care professional (such as an ophthalmologist or optometrist), that they may still not be aware of visual stress.



Colorimeter

In Ottawa, there is a **Visual Stress Clinic called Opticalm.** (www.opticalm.ca) "Opticalm was founded to provide access to an affordable, scientifically supported and non-invasive assistive tools and services to help relieve the symptoms associated with Visual Stress. We carry a wide range of products and screening tools for health and education professionals and a full range of well-priced colour filter solutions for individuals. We also offer Visual Stress screening and assessment services."

Testimonials from Opticalm:
From a 15-year-old girl, referral for post-concussion symptoms:

Mom reported back that "this was such a great experience. To see her reaction to finding the right colour was so wonderful. Her demeanor changed, she relaxed, broke into a big smile and said "This is like heaven on earth", and "see Mommy, I'm not going crazy!"

From a young woman (25):
Two years post concussion, light sensitivity, difficulty at work and with computers. Referred by Vision therapy Optometrist with accommodation for reading with prisms. After the assessment she was emotional at how great the filters felt and that it was the "piece of the puzzle" that was missing all this time. She knew there was more to it than what all the doctors were telling her and is so happy that her optometrist knew about visual stress to be able to refer to us. Other specialists were all about the medication, and not looking into what might be the cause of her sensitivities.

From a young man in first year university:

Thanks so much for your help! I find the glasses help reduce anxiety and increase concentration.

Recently a 6 year old boy was referred to us by an Optometrist:

"Please see this 6 year old boy complaining of different colors in his vision. He has good ocular health, no Rx required, and good binocular vision. He has seen an ophthalmologist that is telling his mother that it is only his imagination. He swears that it isn't."

This little guy actually told his Mom it was his superpower, because he can see colours around objects that others cannot.

His mother shared a story; they were driving and saw one of those souped up cars with blue lights glowing under the car. He asked them if they could see the lights too - and when they said they could he told them that this was what he saw on lots of things that they didn't.



(<http://carsweluv.blogspot.ca/2015/04/souped-up-cars.html>)

Visual Stress Canada Organization

Opticalm is in the process of forming a non-profit charitable organization with members in Healthcare, Education, and the Community to lead in the advocacy for and awareness of the condition, and to encourage partnerships for support.

----- WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT VISUAL STRESS? -----

- Vivian's story: "When I read, I get headaches, the light hurts, and the words move"
- Could it be visual stress?
- What is visual stress?
- How common is it?
- What triggers visual stress?
- What are symptoms of visual stress?
- Common Visual Distortions
- Visual stress can mimic other conditions
- When to see an eye care professional
- What can be done about visual stress?
- Self-Help Strategies for Visual Stress
- Vivian's Story, Part 2
- Further Reading
- References

FOLLOW THIS LINK TO WWW.EMENTALHEALTH.CA:

<http://www.ementalhealth.ca/Ottawa-Carleton/Visual-Stress-Information-for-Patients-and-Families/index.php?m=article&ID=51818>

OR DOWNLOAD THE PDF VERSION OF:

[Visual Stress: Information for Patients and Families from eMentalHealth.ca](#)

Swimming in a wordy reflective sea.

By Sonja P.

My final year of high school was both amazingly memorable but also mentally straining, for more reasons than just getting the grades for Uni. Of course grade 12 had its ups and downs, with increased difficulties in classes as well as the pressing questions of what do I desire to do for further education, however it was in grade 12 when I started to notice difficulties in my vision. I have always had some degree of difficulty with my vision, needing glasses in my early teen years and needing them to the current day, but it was not plainly seeing fuzzy that initialized the search for the cause. It was the pixels that I saw everywhere, as if looking at the world 24/7 through those coded password authentication verifiers (now what I recognize as something called visual snow), as well as difficulty reading text both online and in textbooks, seeing as if on better days, a moving watery reflection dazzling the page, or on worse days, symbols and characters swimming in a sea of literature. In addition, I saw constant auras around people, seeing what I call 'orbs' floating around as well as painful migraines and headaches and other visual type distortions, not to mention the utter frustration of not being able to work as long, or as 'hard' as I previously had been able to.



The process to find Opticalm (www.opticalm.ca) was a tad strenuous. By the time I learned about Visual Stress, I personally thought I was going bananas. After seeing multiple doctors for severe migraines, and of course visual distortions, I was told that it was just migraine and I had to live with it. In order to see if there was anything physically wrong with my eyes, I had on several occasions had different eye exams to ensure nothing was physically impairing my sight. All tests came back negative, as if all these symptoms were solely of a migraine culprit. A migraine culprit that affected me 24/7. It didn't help that my school district and the school program relied heavily on electronics, which in turn worsened the visual distortions and migraines altogether in both pain, frustration and ability to study. It appeared that these visual symptoms seemed to have no cause.

When I finally was acquainted with Opticalm, it was as if the clouds have cleared on a stormy day and you could see a rainbow. The initial test resulted in 100% positive result for something called visual stress, and all of the visual symptoms were covered in the diagnosis. I was promptly (within a couple weeks' time) assigned new purple glasses and there has been many improvements since. One thing that I remember clearly from the time of the coloured lens testing was that we went outside to test them in broad daylight. Often I see little orbs floating around in the sky, however as I tried on the purple lenses, they completely vanished! It seemed almost miraculous and too good to be true. Nonetheless when I finally received my glasses with purple lenses in combination with my current eye prescription, over time I definitely have seen improvements.

Though the visual snow has not disappeared completely with the lenses, their size of pixilation has decreased as well as it is less distracting when doing everyday tasks. Same as the wordy reflective sea on both e-text and regular text. Though it did not wipe out the issue in its entirety, it lessened the impact making reading easier and much more visually pleasing, and less visually strenuous. In terms of the aura, and orbs, I still do see them, but not as commonly as I did before, where seeing them would be a 3 times a day, everyday occurrence, now it is only once or twice a week. It is interesting to note that with stress, and fatigue my visual distortion symptoms do return, and at those times make it very frustrating to work with, even with the purple lenses, however I did try and experiment with the differences of wearing my purple lenses vs just my old prescription glasses, and the difference is extraordinary. Though the purple lenses have not been a complete fix, they have helped my visual stress and symptoms enormously, allowing myself to resume regular and less painful functionality and educating my family and I about Visual Stress and its prominence in an ever so emerging technological world.



Welcome

SOUTH KOREA

Welcome home to Evan Juha, son of Scott and Jennifer of Mitchell, Ontario

Welcome home to Léo Seungyun, son of Ludovic and Izumi of Toronto, Ontario

Welcome home to Hendrik Hye-Seong, son of Alan and Barbara of Ottawa, Ontario

USA

Welcome home to Moriah, born in Florida, USA, daughter of Darren and Christine

INDIA

Welcome home to Dholu, born in New Delhi, India, son to Sharmila.

Welcome home to Harsheela, born in Mumbai, India, daughter of Paul and Amanda.

Welcome home to Mansi, born in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, India, daughter of Varun and Amelia



Children's Bridge

Waiting Children Program CHINA

Welcome home to Cheri-Anne, Xiao Ran (Guangdong Province), daughter of Greg and Rebecca of Stittsville, Ontario.

Welcome home to Jocelyn, Fu Yue (Hubei Province), daughter of Jerry and Leanne of Markham, Ontario

ZAMBIA

Welcome home to Sara, born in Lusaka, Zambia, daughter of Tyler and Erica