



arcs

building connection
and strengthening families.

301 Railway Parade, Maylands WA 6051

How do I contact arcs:

Call us on (08) 9370 4914

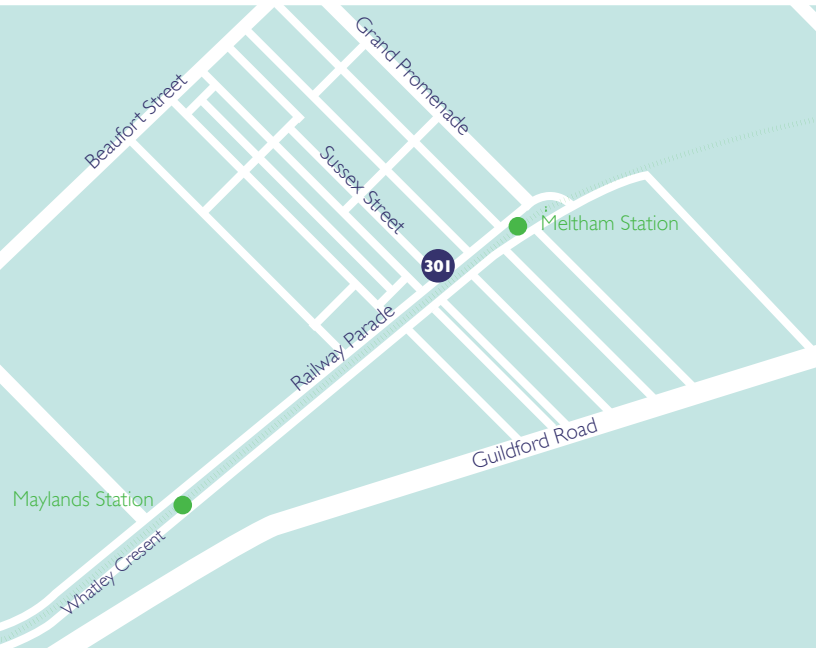
Or email us: arcs@adoptionwa.org.au

www.adoptionwa.org.au



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Our agency:

arcs is an independent, "not for profit" community agency offering professional counselling, support, education, research and information to anyone living with the reality of adoption and or being separated from family.

Since 1984, arcs has been there for those affected by adoption and loss of relationship with family. We have provided specialist services that are responsive to the complex issues faced by all those dealing with the loss and pain of separation from family and the challenges of reconnection.

People come to arcs:

- To explore and make sense of their adoption / family separation, or other forms of family
- To gain understanding of the loss of connection with family
- To make sense of their loss of identity
- To heal from trauma, grief, and attachment disruption
- To facilitate re-unification of children with parents
- To prepare for search and outreach to a lost family member
- For post reunion support in developing their new relationships
- For specialist help in parenting where there has been loss or separation
- To make an informed decision when faced with an unplanned pregnancy



Creating connection,
Healing from adoption
& Nurturing new

promoting understanding
and separation from family
relationships

The Child:

The children we see have all experienced the loss of relationship with a parent / parents.

In our work with these children they express the following feelings and questions:

- Identity – “Who am I”?
- Divided Loyalty “Can I have a relationship”?
- Trust in Relationship “Will this last?”
- Attachment Difficulties “Am I safe?”
- Grief from the loss of a parent. “I miss you”
- Shame / Guilt “This must be my fault?”
- Fear and Anxiety “I don’t know what’s happening?”
- Rejection “What if they didn’t / don’t like me?”
- Anger / Rage / Powerlessness “No one’s listening to me”

The Mother:

Our experience with mothers tells us that:

- The grief of losing a child to adoption is cumulative and lifelong
- Separation from your child can be experienced as traumatic
- The associated shame is pervasive
- Secrecy makes the loss unspeakable and silent
- The mothers may carry guilt that can debilitate and immobilise

Our knowledge and experience informs our therapeutic counselling program

The Father:

In our work with fathers, some common themes are:

- The belief of some fathers that no contact from them is the least painful option for the child
- The sense of powerlessness and confusion about their role as father when there has been separation from their child
- The rage and anger associated with helplessness and grief, from exclusion in their child’s life
- Guilt, due to society’s perception of the separation, as the father’s abandonment of both mother and child
- The general reluctance of males to talk about their feelings
- Having permission to grieve their loss



The Parents:

Adoptive Parents, Step Parents, Custodial Parents, Foster Carers,
Non Custodial Parents, Relative Carers, Grandparents

Our services to those who are parenting a child who
has suffered loss and separation address:

- Acknowledging difference while building connection
- Parenting strategies for building attachment
- Understanding the child's experience / needs
- Parenting a child hurt from loss
- Exploring your own strengths as a parent
- Healing where there has been fear

Time alone
does not heal
the loss of
a child or a
parent

How we do this:

- We work inclusively with the child, parents, carers and extended family
- We are culturally sensitive to families from different ethnic backgrounds
- Our therapy focuses on building secure attachment relationships and healing from loss
- We are responsive to the need for continuity and access throughout all stages of life
- We are child focused and work at the pace of the child.

Searching for a Family Member:

When making the decision
about reconnection.

arcs can assist by:

- Providing a safe and confidential environment where the searcher can explore their options
- Help with applying for copies of original documents
- Support with searching for lost family
- Acting as a mediator and making initial contact
- Facilitating contact in such a way that both parties feel safe and supported
- Providing post reunion support and counselling



The pain of loss and trauma occur in relationship
and can only be healed in relationship