

How to handle the stress of the adoption process

No matter where you are in the adoption process, you're probably dealing with some level of stress. "With adoption, from the beginning, you're on a really steep learning curve," says Maven adoption coach Erica Jourdan. Here are some ways to cope with the ups and downs of the adoption process.

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Find relief from the feeling of judgment

The adoption process can feel long and invasive. While steps like interviews and home studies are important because they help ensure children go to safe homes, it can feel like you're being judged. "The first thing I want to do is validate that," Jourdan says. "For better or worse, you are being judged." This might make you feel defensive, irritable, and upset. Here are some ways you can deal with this frustration:

- Deep or 4-7-8 breathing (Try breathing in for 4 seconds, holding it for 7, breathing out for 8)
- Do a reframe if you're feeling negative about yourself and make a list of why you and/or your partner are going to be great parents
- Journal about what you're experiencing
- Talk to your community, family, partner, or friends about how you're feeling



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Look for support systems that match your values

The adoption process can be lengthy, so when you are looking for people to support you along this journey, be sure to find ones that feel like a good match. Especially when you're considering agencies, lawyers, or birth parents, find people who make you feel at ease and cared for from the beginning. "Be as authentic as possible," Jourdan recommends. "You don't want to try to 'sell yourself.' It's about who makes you feel comfortable and speaks your language."

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Get information from trusted sources

There's a fine line between getting the right information and over-Googleing. "A lot of families will take their anxiety to Google or the bookstore and start reading up on all the adoption and parenting information they can find," says Jourdan. Look for quick tips and tricks rather than reading everything you can find.