**A FEW WORDS ABOUT SEARCHING FOR BIOLOGICAL RELATIVES**

Whether you want a Non-Identifying History Report (Non Id) or you would like to search for a biological relative, the process will almost certainly be emotional. People who request a Non-Id often learn information about themselves, such as their ethnicity and the social history of their birth family, that may answer some questions initially, but this new knowledge may raise a whole new set of questions.

Deciding to search for a biological relative is exciting, but there are many scenarios to consider. Will the person I am searching for want to become acquainted with me? If they say yes, how will we begin to get to know each other and what will our relationship look like after we get to know each other? If they say no, why would they do this? Am I prepared for a “no” answer?

Being “found” is also emotional. Has the found biological parent told his/her family and friends about the adoptee? Does the found adoptee want to extend their family circle to include their birth family? There is no way to know the answers to these questions until we ask, and it is important to understand and respect the decision of the found party. Statistically, 92% of the time, people do want to reunite. However, it is important to try to be prepared for the fact that you may be part of the 8% who receive a “no” answer. Consider that:

-A person may be fearful of being rejected (again) and/or of not being liked.

-A person (especially common in birth mothers) may fear being the target of anger or resentment.

-A person may not be ready or able to work through the overwhelming emotions that inevitably result from a reunion.

Some individuals are confused about the role of a Confidential Intermediary (CI). CI’s must work within the strict and very specific direction of the RCW’s pertaining to search and reunion. A CI is a neutral third party, appointed by the court, to have access to sealed records for the purpose of searching. ***They may not share information from a sealed file with you; a CI who does this will be subject to civil liability under Washington State Law and may be found in contempt of court.***

In any event, it is important for the searching party to have support from a person close to them, someone with a sympathetic ear who can be available to listen as they process the events in this journey.

There are books available through your local library, and other bookstores that can broaden your perspective about search and reunion. A book that documents the complexity of the search journey is Family Medical History Unknown/Adopted by Nancy Feldman and Rebecca Crofoot. The companion book, Who Am I? by Rebecca Crofoot is designed to help you navigate your own search through journaling.