

DR. ALISSA BEUERLEIN

DONOR CONCEIVED TRAUMA

WHAT IS DONOR CONCEPTION?

- ▶ Donor conceived people (DCP)
- ▶ Anonymity amongst donors
- ▶ Unknown numbers of DCP
- ▶ At-home DNA testing



POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH DONOR CONCEPTION

- ▶ High number of siblings
- ▶ Lack of disclosure and anonymity
- ▶ Medical history

WHAT IS THE HARM OF ANONYMITY?

- ▶ Similarities between adoptees and DCP
- ▶ “Approximately 94 percent were conceived anonymously and almost 85 percent reported a shift in their “sense of self” upon learning about the nature of their conception and about half sought psychological help in order to cope. Nearly 74 percent said that they often or very often think about the nature of their conception” (Burke et al., 2021).

IDENTITY

- ▶ Missing crucial information
- ▶ The age old question: what if they had never known?

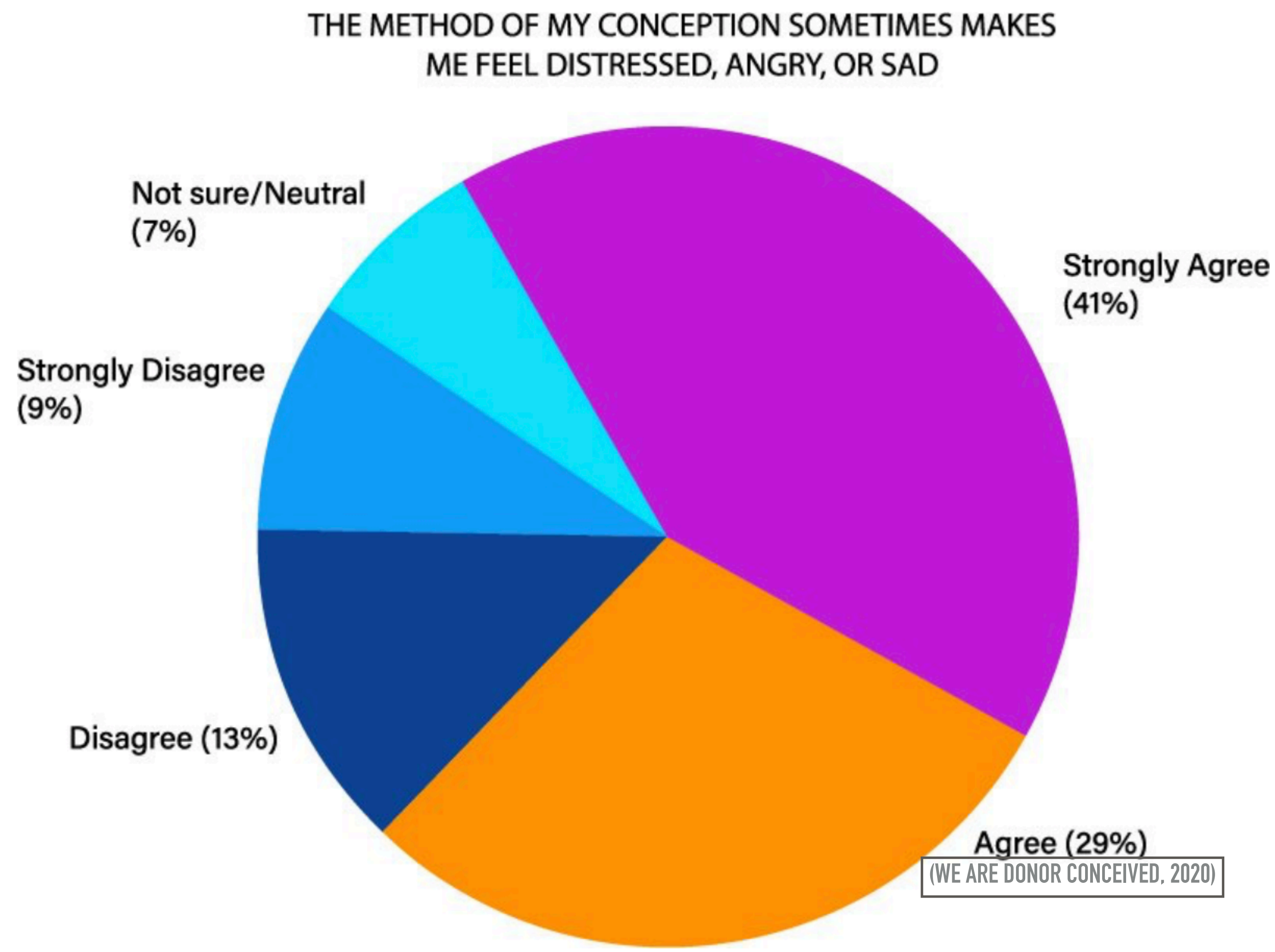


GENEALOGICAL BEWILDERMENT

- ▶ Typical psychological development requires knowledge of heredity and identity



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MENTAL HEALTH OF NPE

- ▶ NPE (Non-paternity event) or MPE (Misattributed parentage event)
- ▶ Depression, anxiety, panic symptoms worsen (statistically significant difference compared to control)

RELATIONSHIPS TO RECIPIENT PARENTS

- ▶ Centering donors and recipient parents
- ▶ Looking for a biological parent does not have to negatively affect a DCP's relationship to raising (recipient) parents
- ▶ DCP often do not feel they can talk about their desire to have a relationship with their biological parent with their social parent (Beeson et al., 2011)

DISCOVERY

- ▶ How are DCP finding out they are donor conceived?
- ▶ Siblings



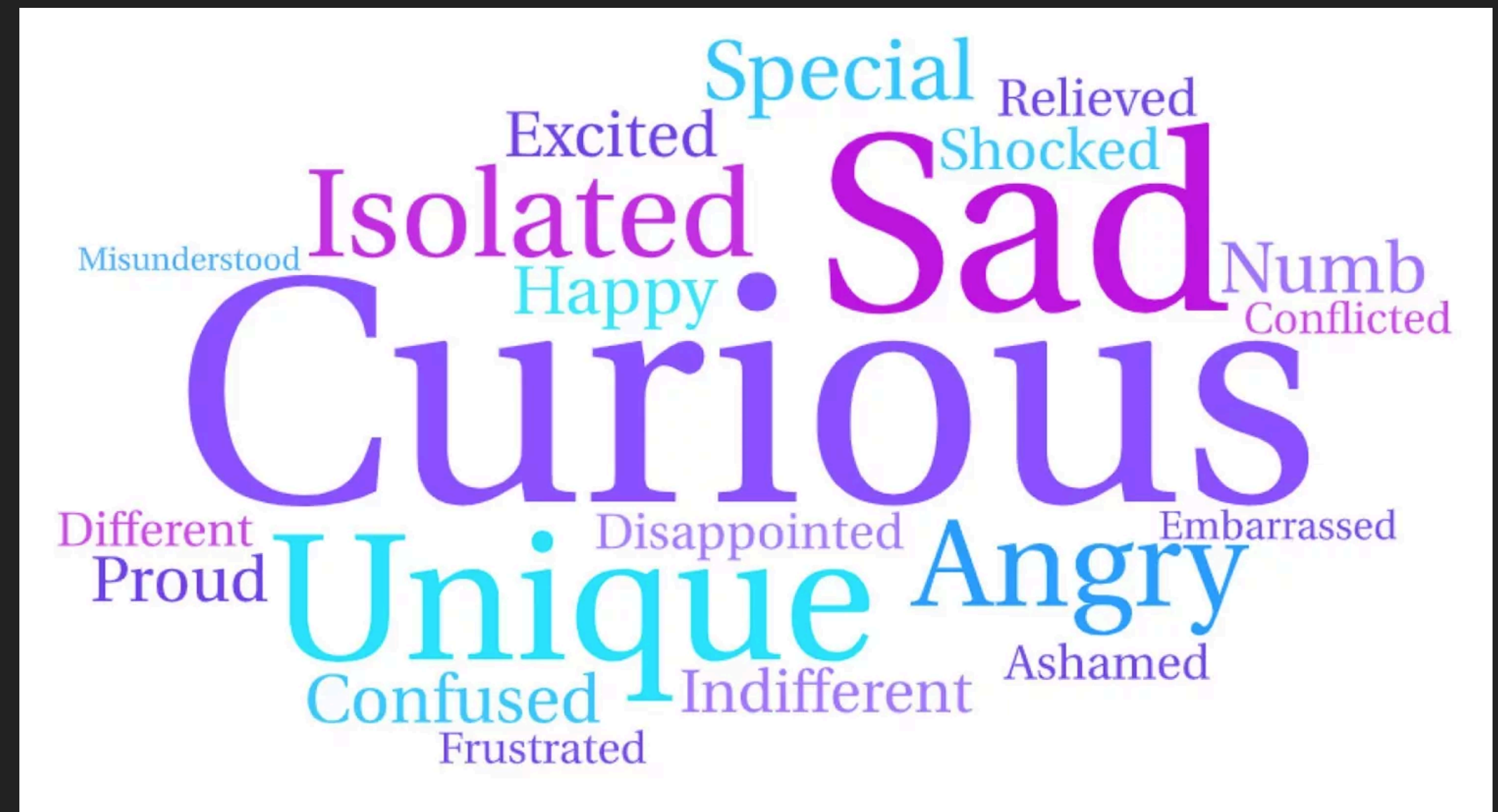
TERMINOLOGY

- ▶ What DCP call parents, donors, siblings



WHAT DCP HAVE SAID ABOUT THERAPY AFTER DISCOVERY

- ▶ Overlooked
- ▶ Validated
- ▶ Invalidated/obsessed
- ▶ Calming
- ▶ Invalidating
- ▶ Not done enough research
- ▶ Unhelpful



How being donor conceived makes DCP feel presently, larger words were most commonly selected (WADC survey, 2020)

THERAPEUTIC CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Person of the therapist issues
- ▶ Center the client
- ▶ Various traumas specific to DCP



THE WAY FORWARD

- ▶ Early disclosure (Jadva et al., 2009; Beeson et al., 2011; Freeman and Golombok, 2012; Hertz et al., 2013)
- ▶ Technological advances
- ▶ ID at 18 (positive and negative)
- ▶ Late disclosure impact

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