

SURVIVAL BEHAVIORSSurvival Behavior**Aggressiveness**Underlying Emotional Issue

Fear of becoming attached.
I'll hurt you before you can hurt me.

Testing and Control Battles

Need for control.
I feel like my life is out of control, so I'll try to control you!

Identity Issues

Poor sense of self-esteem.
Because of my abuse/neglect, many moves, or believing I was given away, I feel like a nobody.

Anger/depression

Underlying tension that can't be identified or described in words.
I'm afraid to get close to you. You may hurt me too.

Values issues, Lying/Stealing

Conflict in values.
What I learned from my experiences is very different from your family. If I tell the truth, I may be hurt. I must take what I need in order to take care of myself.

Separation Anxiety

Emotional or developmental delays.
You will leave me, just like everyone else has.

Over-competency

Need for control.
I don't trust that you can take care of me, so I'll have to do it myself.

Inappropriate sexual behavior

Sexual abuse victim or witness.
This is the only way I know how to get close.

Withdrawal from relationships

Fear of becoming attached or hurt.
I won't relate to you. That way, I won't have to care about you.

Hoarding

Fear of being out of control
I think of the world as scarce, and I need to make sure my needs will be met.

Hypervigilance

I believe that the world is a cruel and hostile place and I must always be aware that the next disappointment or painful experience is just around the corner.

"Wise beyond my years"

I have learned how to manipulate the systems that control me.

Adapted from Jackson, R. and Wasserman, K., Michigan Post Adoption Services System Curriculum, Southfield, MI, Spaulding for Children, 1994.