



991 W. Hedding St. - Ste.101, San Jose, CA 95126

Telephone (408) 296-1113 Fax (408) 296-1117 [www.vca.org](http://www.vca.org)

- Dedicated Service Since 1981 -

---

---

## **Tips for Parents of Adults Parentally Abducted as Children**

by Georgia K. Hilgeman-Hammond, Executive Director  
Vanished Children's Alliance

1. Your adult child will probably never understand the pain, suffering, and sacrifice you experienced while they were missing. Do not expect it.
2. While you might feel extremely angry toward the abducting parent, it is important that you separate the deed from the doer when interacting with your adult child. There is a big difference between saying what the abductor did was wrong and that the abductor is bad. Never ask your adult child to take sides.
3. Let your adult child know that they are in no way responsible for their abduction and concealment.
4. Allow your adult child to feel what they feel about the event and the abducting parent. Encourage them to express these feelings. Listen without judging. All people respond better when they feel heard and understood.
5. Become a person that can be asked questions. Answer your adult child's questions honestly. Questions dealing with who, when, where, and what can be answered factually. Questions about "why" should be prefaced as opinions because we cannot always understand the "whys" of the actions of others, or even our own.
6. Although you lost significant time with your adult child, you need to treat them as an adult. You might wish to recapture time and a lost childhood, but treating your adult child as a youngster can only create resentment.
7. Remember, while your adult child may actually resemble, or have some of the mannerisms of the abducting parent, your adult child is a unique and different person.
8. Take care of yourself. Face your own fears and losses. If your adult child sees you constantly in pain and angry, they might choose not to be around you. In addition, you are best to model strength to your adult child, as opposed to that of helpless victimization.
9. Find safe friends, family, or a therapist that you can talk to about *all* your feelings, but don't dump your feelings on your adult child.
10. Don't be afraid to be human. You will make mistakes as a parent, admit them, apologize for them, and move on.
11. Have fun with your adult child. While the past cannot be changed, the future is filled with possibilities.