What’s Adoption Competency and Where Can I Find It?

AAICAMA Annual Meeting
Denver, Colorado
May 5, 2013
What do YOU think?

* What is adoption competence?
* How is it an important concept in your work?
* What specific topics do you hope we will discuss today?
Where is Adoption Competence Needed?
Adoption Competent Child Welfare Practice

* Federal Laws and Policies Impacting Adoption Placement
* Child/Youth Assessment and Preparation
* Family Assessment and Preparation
* Decision Making and Placement Selection in Adoption
* Negotiating Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Agreements
* Post Adoption Services
* Compassion Fatigue: Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma
Child/Youth Assessment & Preparation Competencies

* Engage children & youth in planning for their present and future life experiences.
* Complete and document a comprehensive assessment.
* Assist children & youth to gain a better understanding of what has happened and what will be happening.
* Utilize a variety of tools and techniques to engage, assess, and prepare children & youth for permanency.
* Utilize the assessment and preparation process to inform placement decisions and develop service plans.
* Collaborate with others.

*Competencies adapted from NRCA Adoption Competence Curriculum*
Family Assessment & Preparation Competencies

* Provide prospective adoptive parents with learning opportunities to empower them to self-assess their interest in adoption and prepare to meet the needs of children and youth.
* Complete a family assessment and write a profile/home study/social history using a family empowerment model.
* Complete an assessment of the family’s suitability for a specific child or youth.
* Prepare current caregivers to make the transition to adopting.
Incorporate information from child/youth and family assessments to guide the selection of families with the best potential to meet children’s needs and desires.

Use team decision-making approaches to empower families and children/youth in making adoption decisions.

Understand and manage the impact of personal bias in selection of adoptive families.

Understand and follow laws and policies that address the selection of adoptive parents.
Post Adoption Services Competencies

* Understand the services necessary in supporting families and children/youth after adoption and the essential elements of a successful post adoption services plan.
* Provide information about services and training topics available to fully support families.
* Understand child/youth developmental stages and survival behaviors, and their effects on adoption preservation.
* Have knowledge of the process for crisis stabilization and how to develop a crisis contingency plan.
* Develop individualized plans for family support.
After Adoption... What Do Parents Say They Need?
More than 1,100 adoptive parents responded.

Greatest unmet service needs:
- Educational issues - 40%
- Finding mental health care providers - 39%
- Medical needs – 10%

About 1/3 described their child(ren) as having no significant problems.
Most Useful Supports Identified by Adoptive Parents
NACAC Survey 2010

- Newsletters: 40%
- Online Groups: 40%
- Training/Education: 50%
- Medical Care: 50%
- Experienced Families: 60%
- Adoption Subsidies: 60%
Barriers to Accessing Services
NACAC Adoptive Parent 2010

- Can't find needed services: 43%
- Providers don't understand adoption: 39%
- Cost is too high: 33%
- Providers don't accept Medicaid: 30%
- No barriers experienced: 29%
- Eligibility problems: 26%
- Services do not exist in my community: 25%
- Don't know how to find services: 21%
- Wait for services too long: 20%
- Services are too far away: 18%
Top 4 Areas Where Advocacy for Improvement is Needed:

* Adoption competency training
* Mental health services
* Training and education for parents
* Educational advocacy and support
An Approach to Developing Professional Competence: Certificate Programs

* Step 1: Establish the need for your program
* Step 2: Determine the target audience
* Step 3: Secure the funding
* Step 4: Identify community partners
* Step 5: Develop committees and identify responsibilities
* Step 6: Test a pilot program
Advice from Experienced Certificate Programs

* Decide program delivery: on-site or distance learning, or both?
* Develop a pre-program reading list
* Support the program with strong advocacy and publicity
* Develop a “next step” for continuing education
* Be clear about what the “certificate” signifies
* Build in some flexibility in attendance and payment time frames
Advice from Experienced Certificate Programs

* Develop a Core Curriculum - required and elective options
* Assure cohesion and connections among and between the courses
* To assure continuity, assign a facilitator to attend every session
* Use top level instructors, including local experts
* Coach instructors on adult learning theory and group management
* Reinforce transfer from theory into practice skills
Selecting and Working with a Therapist Skilled in Adoption

* Offers parents information on:
  • Professionals who provide mental health services
  • Approaches to therapy
  • Treatment settings
  • Finding the right therapist
  • Working with a therapist
  • National resource organizations
At a minimum, a therapist must:

* Be knowledgeable about adoption and its psychological impact on children and families.
* Be knowledgeable about the impact of trauma.
* Be knowledgeable about the role and impact of attachment on the mind/body for the developing child.
* Be experienced in working with adopted children and their families.
* Know the types of help available for adoption-related issues and problems.
* Have received training in working with adoptive families.

QUESTIONS FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO ASK WHEN INTERVIEWING A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

* How does the mental health professional involve parents in the treatment process?
* How does the mental health professional work with families when the adoption is transracial or transcultural?

From the NRCA publication, *A Guide to Developing an Adoption Certificate Program for Mental Health Professionals.*
QUESTIONS FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO ASK WHEN INTERVIEWING A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

* Is the mental health professional willing to work with other professionals involved with the family’s adoption, such as social workers, teachers and other mental health professionals?
* Can the therapist estimate a timeframe for the course of therapy?
* What are the mental health professional’s policies about reimbursement and scheduling?

From the NRCA publication, A Guide to Developing an Adoption Certificate Program for Mental Health Professionals.
Are they making this stuff up? Assessing the evidence for treatment approaches

Resources

* The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare  www.cebc4cw.org
* National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth  http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov
* Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development  www.blueprintsprograms.com
* National Child Traumatic Stress Network  www.nctsn.org
* What Works Clearing House (Education)  http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc
A Closer Look at How One Clearinghouse Rates Evidence of Effectiveness

1. Well-Supported by Research Evidence
2. Supported by Research Evidence
3. Promising Research Evidence
4. Evidence Fails to Demonstrate Effect
5. Concerning Practice
NR Not able to be Rated
### Programs with a Scientific Rating of 1
Well-Supported by Research Evidence:

- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

### Programs with a Scientific Rating of 2
Supported by Research Evidence:

- Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)
- Prolonged Exposure Therapy for Adolescents (PE-A)

---

Examples - California EBP Clearinghouse: Trauma Treatment (Child & Adolescent)
### Examples - California EBP Clearinghouse: Disruptive Behavior Treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs with a Scientific Rating of 1</th>
<th>Well-Supported by Research Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Coping Power Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Incredible Years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care - Adolescents (MTFC-A)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multisystemic Therapy (MST)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Oregon Model, Parent Management Training (PMTO™)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problem Solving Skills Training (PSST)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Triple P - Positive Parenting Program® - Level 4 (provisional rating)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs with a Scientific Rating of 2</th>
<th>Supported by Research Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Community Parent Education Program (COPE) –</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Functional Family Therapy (FFT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care for Preschoolers (MTFC-P)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
* Outlines guiding principles of *ASAP services, and the system of care and supports that are needed by children/ youth and families.

* Includes detailed surveys from 34 states:
  • Service array, structure, qualifications, funding, additional information

* How is information about adoption-competent services made available within your state? Shared outside?
* How do you learn about what is available in other jurisdictions?
* Do you have ideas about how information sharing could be improved?
Wrapping It Up

* What else?
* Closing comments

Thank You!


References


Contact Us . . .

16250 Northland Drive, Suite 120
Southfield, MI 48075
Telephone: 248.443.7080

Fax: 248.443.7099
E-mail: nrc@nrcadoption.org
Web site: www.nrcadoption.org