

The National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI) Pilot for Mental Health Professionals to Launch in March 2018

Press Release: January 10, 2018



National Adoption Competency
Mental Health **Training Initiative**

Burtonsville MD - The National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI) is announcing the availability of its free web-based, state-of-the-art, adoption competency mental health pilot training for mental health professionals to be launched in March 2018. This evidence-informed standardized curriculum is one of NTI's two adoption competency training curricula funded by the Children's Bureau and developed by the [Center for Adoption Support and Education](#) (C.A.S.E.) with the University of Maryland School of Social Work / Institute for Innovation and Implementation, PolicyWorks and several curricula developers.

The NTI training provides clinicians with a no-cost opportunity to become better equipped to address the mental health needs of children, youth, and families moving toward or having achieved permanency through adoption and guardianship. The training modules provide foundational knowledge, values, and skills for adoption-competent casework and clinical practice. [The content](#) addresses the core issues of adoption and guardianship with a focus on assessment, support, and therapeutic interventions to promote permanency and family stability.

The NTI curriculum for mental health professionals pilot training will be implemented in the pilot sites of California, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington, and The Cherokee Nation. This training developed for mental health professionals has followed the NTI curriculum for child welfare professionals which completed its [pilot training](#) in December 2017 with nearly 6000 pilot users enrolled and a completion rate of nearly 70%. The national launch of both curricula is planned for 2019, kicking off open access to the training post-pilot for the first time in all states, tribes, and territories.

Dawn Wilson, Director of NTI, addressed the intense need for this adoption competency training, "Because of traumatic life experiences and compromised beginnings, many children who are adopted or in guardianship experience elevated risks for developmental, health, emotional, and behavioral challenges." Research shows that the impact of these experiences and challenges often compromise well-being and family stability.

- Up to **80 percent** of children in foster care have significant mental health issues, compared to approximately 18-22 percent of the general population.

Dore, 2005; National Conference of State Legislatures, 2016

[National advisors](#) have vetted the NTI competencies including clinicians, adoption researchers, child



welfare administrators, and people with lived experience. [Debbie Riley](#), LCMFT, CEO of C.A.S.E. added, “We believe NTI has the potential to continuously improve outcomes by infusing adoption mental health competencies into child welfare and mental health practice. I am excited and eager to advance the development of accessible adoption competency curriculums.” Debbie explains

further in [the video above](#).



“NTI offers an easy-to-use and comprehensive overview of the unique issues of children in adoption and foster care placement,” said NTI Advisor, David Brodzinsky, Developmental, Clinical, and Forensic Psychologist, Professor Emeritus of Clinical Psychology, Rutgers University. He continued, “Understanding adoption challenges and issues that can influence self-esteem, identity, family relationships and psychological adjustment is critical for mental

health professionals to consider in their work with these individuals. The reality shared by many adoptive families is that therapists lacking adoption competence training can, at times, do more harm than good. I have found there is very little substantive training like NTI available today.”

Mental Health Professionals interested in participating in the NTI Mental Health Pilot are invited to go to www.adoptionsupport.org/info4nti and sign up for more information.

About C.A.S.E.

The Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E) is the national leader in mental health services for the adoption and foster care community. We nurture, inspire, and empower adoptive and foster families and the professionals who serve them. Our headquarters location is Burtonsville, Maryland. For more info: www.adoptionsupport.org

About NTI

NTI was established in October 2014 through a five-year, \$9 million cooperative agreement with C.A.S.E. and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau Grant #90CO1121. The National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI) is developing free, state-of-the-art web-based adoption competency mental health trainings for child welfare and mental health professionals. For more info: www.adoptionsupport.org/nti.

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