



## Focus on Module 1: THE CASE FOR ADOPTION COMPETENCY

Module 1 highlights the urgent need for permanency for youth in care, guiding principles that support effective mental health practices, and the evolving field of child welfare practice.

### ADOPTION COMPETENCY BENEFITS CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Because of traumatic life experiences and compromised beginnings, children who are adopted or in guardianship experience elevated risks for developmental, health, emotional, and behavioral challenges. The impact of these experiences compromise well-being, family stability, and permanency for children.

NTI seeks to improve these outcomes by infusing enhanced adoption competency in the provision of casework and clinical practice.

Module 1 Lesson 1 includes the training objectives for NTI. Print the handout, [NTI Training Objectives](#), and use this document as a roadmap, print it off, post it where you can see it and check back on progress you've made.

### PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN PRACTICE

Module 1 Lesson 2 highlights ways in which child welfare and mental health professionals can work together with adoptive and guardianship parents, preparing them for their new role and supporting them through any challenges that may arise throughout the lifelong journey of adoption. You can help them to understand:

- Becoming a family is a reciprocal, 2-way process
- Parents provide a healing environment
- Unresolved parental grief impacts the child
- Seeking help is a sign of strength

## PRACTICE CHANGES

There have been many changes in child welfare over the years. There were biases against placing children with relatives, single parents, and against the capacity of the birth family to become good enough parents. There were beliefs about which children were “adoptable” and not so.

That is no longer the case, due in large part to changes in Federal legislation and the understanding that children heal and thrive in permanent, safe, loving families.

**Handout - Trends in US Adoptions** provides national and state-specific data on public, private and International adoption trends from 2008-2012.

## URGENT NEED FOR PERMANENCY

Every child deserves a childhood, every child deserves a family. Research indicates that the long-term and uncertain nature of foster care negatively impacts a child in many ways, including: sense of belonging, positive identity formation, emotional well-being, and leads to an array of mental health challenges.

In 2013, more than 400,000 children were in foster care nationwide, and nearly 23,000 aged without connection to anyone. In fact, nearly 10% of children in the system have goals of long term foster care or emancipation. The outcomes for these children are predictable and grim. Risks of aging out are highlighted in **Handout 1.4.1 - Risky Behaviors of Youth Aging Out**. Embrace the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption’s conviction, “unadoptable is unacceptable,” and work with your team to develop strategies for finding families for youth in care.

**Your role is critical. As a child welfare professional, you become the bridge to the healing relationships that youth so urgently need. Module 1 contains numerous videos, stories and resources to guide you in this important work.**



## NTI Training Improved Competence

*“Through the NTI web-based trainings, C.A.S.E. will support a common core of mental health and adoption learning that will enhance the ability of child welfare and mental health professionals to speak a shared language and collaborate to better serve adoptive children and their forever families.”*

JOHN L. JOHNSON,  
Director of Foster Care, Guardianship,  
and Adoption Services and Former  
President of National Association of  
State Adoption Program Managers

[See More Tip Sheets from NTI](#)

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