nti

National Adoption Competency
Mental Health **Training Initiative**

adoptionsupport.org/nti

TIP SHEET
Module 8
Child Welfare Professionals

Focus on Module 8:

Promoting Family Stability

SUPPORTING SUCCESS

Module 8, the final module in the NTI Child Welfare Curriculum, examines ways in which child welfare professionals can help adoptive and guardianship succeed long-term.

ADOPTION & DEVELOPMENT

Experts agree that there are certain adoption-related issues that surface again and again for adoptees, adoptive parents, and birth parents as they address various aspects of adoption. Life events can trigger adoption-related feelings that may be laying beneath the surface, such as the death of loved one, or the birth of a baby.

Handout 8.1.1 identifies unique developmental tasks related to stages of the adopted child's psychosocial development.

Reflection:

Can you think of a situation where wished a therapist had taken a different approach with child and her family? Can you recall a time when a family reported feeling angry or unsupported?

Helping the Helper:

As an adoption competent child welfare provider, you have a unique opportunity to educate clinicians who are working with children and youth in adoption/guardianship families. Print **Handout 8.2.1**, a list of the characteristics and skills that an adoption competent therapist possesses, and share it with your families. Mail a copy of the handout to the clinicians who work with children on your caseload with a brief note letting them know that you would like to work together to keep children and families together.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

There are qualities parents possess that support positive adjustment after adoption or guardianship, including:

- Realistic expectations
- Appropriate parenting skills
- Capacity to manage responses
- Unconditional commitment to the child

Become a Coach:

Module 8 Lesson 3 is rich with resources relevant to these protective factors. Provide a listing of the resources to families and coach them to adjust expectations, learn new parenting skills, and make an unconditional commitment to their child. Welcome questions, validate their experiences and efforts, and convey to them that their fears and stresses are normal, that seeking help is not a sign of failure. Open dialogue will feel supportive and will benefit everyone.

POST ADOPTION SERVICES

Handout 8.3.1 "Finding and Using Post Adoption Services" is a valuable resource to keep and use with families. Although resources may have been provided in pre-adoption training, they often get lost along the way. Make copies of this handout and distribute at parent meetings, home visits, etc.

Brainstorm:

Are there additional resources that your families typically seek out? Take time in a team meeting to develop a list of needs that your adoptive and guardianship families have identified and brainstorm resources that others have found useful. Share positive experiences as well as those providers who were less than helpful.

NTI Training
Improved Competence

Reach Out:

NTI's Mental Health Curriculum will be launched in Spring 2018. Encourage your mental health partners to enroll.

The more adoption competent therapists in your state, the better for children and families!

See More Tip Sheets from NTI

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