



Focus on Module 1: THE CASE for ADOPTION COMPETENCY

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



ADOPTION COMPETENCY BENEFITS CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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. The impact of these experiences and challenges compromises well-being and family stability.

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

Module 1 Lesson 1 includes the training objectives for NTI. Print the handout, [NTI Training Objectives](#), and distribute at a team meeting to provide a framework to new users.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN PRACTICE

Module 1 Lesson 2 highlights the Guiding Principles for adoption competent child welfare practice – preparing parents and guardians for their new role and supporting them and their children through any challenges that may arise throughout the lifelong journey. You can help them to understand:

- Loss is at the heart of adoption
- Becoming a family is a reciprocal, 2-way process
- Parents provide the healing environment for their child
- Unresolved parental grief impacts the child
- Seeking help is a sign of strength
- Attachments can be built and rebuilt

PRACTICE CHANGES

There have been many changes in child welfare over the years. Previously, there were biases against placing children with relatives and single parents, and against the capacity of the birth family to make necessary changes. There were also beliefs and biases about which children were “adoptable.”.

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.

URGENT NEED FOR PERMANENCY

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 their sense of belonging, their identity, and emotional well-being, which can lead to an array of mental health challenges.

Annually, approximately 400,000 children are in foster care nationwide, and even more disturbing is the thousands of young people who age out of foster care each year **without connection to anyone**. The outcomes for these young people are predictable and grim – from lower graduation rates to homelessness to increases in incarceration.

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 Improves 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,
Former 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



Contact NTI for more information: ntiadmin@adoptionsupport.org

NTI is funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children’s Bureau, Grant #90CO1121. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the funder, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This information is in the public domain. Readers are encouraged to copy and share it, but please credit the National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative.