



# School-Based Mental Health Professionals Training

Adapted from National Adoption Competency  
Mental Health Training Initiative

**Better Outcomes for Children & Youth!**

## **Eight Content-Rich Modules are Included in the Training:**

### **Module 01: A Case for Adoption Competency**

Module 1 provides an overview of the training and makes the case for the need for adoption competency. Lessons in this module orient participants to the training; highlight the guiding principles that provide the foundation for work with students and families from an adoption or guardianship lens.

**Lesson 1:** Course Overview and The Need for Adoption Competency

**Lesson 2:** The Language of Adoption

**Lesson 3:** Guiding Principles That Support Effective Mental Health Practice

**Lesson 4:** Achieving and Maintaining Permanence Is Key to Well-Being and Mental Health

**Lesson 5:** Core Clinical Issues in Adoption and their Link to Mental Health

### **Module 02: Understanding and Addressing the Complex Mental Health Needs of Children & Youth in Adoptive and Guardianship Families**

Module 2 provides context for mental health needs of students and the importance of helping students understand their life stories. Lessons focus on limitations of practices commonly used with students that are in adoption, foster, or kinship care.

**Lesson 1:** The Big Picture: Understanding the Factors that Shape Children's Adjustment in Adoptive and Guardianship Families

**Lesson 2:** Understanding the Impact of Early Childhood Experiences on Mental Health

**Lesson 3:** Tools and Techniques for Helping Children Integrate Their Life Stories

**Lesson 4:** Issues in Diagnosis and Treatment of Adopted Children's Mental Health Needs

### **Module 03 – Attachment, Child Development, and Mental Health**

Module 3 focuses on understanding the impact of early insecure attachments and supporting the process of rebuilding or strengthening attachments. Lessons focus on attachment challenges manifesting in the classroom and strategies for supporting students to feel safe and secure in the school setting.

**Lesson 1:** Understanding Attachment as the Foundation for Child Development and Mental Health

**Lesson 2:** The Implications of Attachment Challenges in Treatment

### **Module 04 – The Impact of Loss and Grief Experiences on Children’s & Youth’s Mental Health**

Module 4 focuses on the central role of loss and grief in foster care, adoption, or guardianship and how unresolved loss impacts the mental health of students. We will review therapeutic strategies while assisting the student with maintaining family, community, and cultural connections.

**Lesson 1:** The Impact of Ambiguous Loss and Unresolved Grief on Emotional Adjustment and Mental Health

**Lesson 2:** Understanding Loss and Grief Issues in Adoption in the Context of Developmental Stages, Emotional Adjustments, and Mental Health of Children & Youth.

**Lesson 3:** Understanding and Supporting the Stages of Grief in Adoption and Helping Youth Manage Their Losses.

**Lesson 4:** Impact of Abandonment and Rejection on Children’s Mental Health

### **Module 05 – Trauma and the Impact of Adverse Experiences on Brain Development and Mental Health**

Module 5 focuses on the trauma and its impact on brain development, behavior, and mental health of students experiencing adoption or guardianship. Lessons focus on tools to establish safety, building coping and regulatory skills, and supporting readiness for students to process emotions related to traumatic experiences.

**Lesson 1:** Traumatic Experiences of Children Achieving Permanency through Adoption and Guardianship

**Lesson 2:** Understanding the Impact of Trauma on Children’s Mental Health

**Lesson 3:** Assessing Trauma Exposure and Its Impact on Children

**Lesson 4:** Treatment Goals for Remediating the Consequences of Trauma

**Lesson 5:** Models for Addressing Complex Trauma

## **Module 06 – Understanding the Impact of Race, Ethnicity, Culture, Class, and Diversity on Children and Families**

In Module 6, participants will learn how race, ethnicity, culture, class, and diversity impact a student's experience of adoption or guardianship. Lessons focus on understanding challenges in various types of diverse families. Lessons also focus on being aware of one's own biases and commitment to preserve student's culture, race, ethnic identity, and sexual orientation/gender identity and expressions.

**Lesson 1:** Understanding the Impact of Race, Ethnicity, Culture, Class and Diversity on the Adoption and Guardianship Experience

**Lesson 2:** Understanding the Mental Health Needs of Children in Diverse Adoptive and Guardianship Families

**Lesson 3:** Talking About Race and Racial Identity

**Lesson 4:** The Mental Health Professional's Role in Working with Youth with Diverse Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression

## **Module 07 - Identity Formation and the Impact of Adoption and Guardianship**

Module 7 focuses on the nature of identity formation in the context of adoption and guardianship. Lessons focus on understanding identity formation. Also included are strategies for helping students do the work of understanding who they are, where they came from, and where they are going.

**Lesson 1:** Overview: Identity Matters

**Lesson 2:** Identity Formation During the Adolescent Years

**Lesson 3:** Supporting Positive Identity Formation

## **MODULE 8: Adoption and the Life -Long Journey: Providing Ongoing Supports for Youth**

Module 8 looks at adoption as a life-long process. Lessons will focus on supporting students in the school setting to develop self-regulation and coping skills. Lessons also explore the unique needs of relative caregivers, and the continuum of post-adoption/guardianship services that help to prevent disruption or dissolution.

**Lesson 1:** Teaching Self-Regulation Skills

**Lesson 2:** Unique Assessment Issues when Working with Relative Caregivers

**Lesson 3:** Supporting Stability and Wellness Long-term