Why Should Mental Health Professionals and Providers Invest in NTI?

The Need for Adoption Competency Training

- Children and youth experiencing foster care, adoption, guardianship and kinship care experience early adverse experiences and the loss of birth family, community, and culture more than children and youth who haven't had these experiences.

- The losses children and youth experience are often complicated by multiple moves, rejection, uncertainty, and loss of control over their circumstances, contributing to an increased risk for mental, emotional, behavioral and developmental challenges.

- According to the Academy of Pediatrics, the greatest unmet need for children experiencing foster care is mental health. Around 80 percent of children in foster care have significant mental health issues, compared to 18-22 percent of the general population (The Academy of Pediatrics, 2020).

- Adoptees have twice the risk of experiencing psychiatric disorders, contact with mental health services, or treatment in a psychiatric hospital, compared to that of non-adoptees. Elevated risks were observed specifically for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorders, anxiety disorders, conduct disorders/oppositional defiant disorders, depression, substance use disorders, and psychoses (Behle & Pinquart, 2016).

- Adoptive families have reported going to multiple therapists to find one that understands their family's needs; often having to "train" therapists on their unique challenges that are different from families formed by birth. (C.A.S.E. 2013; NACAC, 2011). Research shows that without appropriate care, 62% of individuals will have lifelong disorders.

- Most mental health systems are not achieving the mental health outcomes for this population and are paying for or providing services that are not achieving the desired

results.

- Most mental health professionals did not receive specific training in graduate or post-graduate education that focuses on the core issues for children, youth and families experiencing foster care, adoption, guardianship, and kinship care:

  - Supporting youth through ambiguous loss and disenfranchised grief
  - Promoting attachment and bonding
  - Understanding the need behind the behavior and differentiating between won't and can't behaviors
  - Supporting positive identity formation, especially for those in interracial/intercultural placements
  - Conducting assessment and treatment planning through an adoption lens
  - Therapeutic parenting strategies to support behavioral challenges

The Benefits to Mental Health Systems/Providers:

- Having adoption-competent staff can help systems/providers meet their network adequacy requirements, assuring enough trained providers to serve the population.

- Data gleaned from NTI participants can help provider leadership to better understand and target the knowledge/skills areas the workforce needs for further professional development.

- Having adoption-competent staff can help leadership assure equity in service delivery for the population of children, youth, and families who do not currently have their mental health needs met.

- NTI provides aligned curriculum for child welfare and mental health professionals – creating a shared understanding between the two disciplines to enhance collaboration.

- NTI can work with systems/providers to create learning cohorts and provide coaching for staff to support integration of learning into practice.

The Benefits for Mental Health Professionals/Practitioners:

- Strategies and tools learned from NTI can help mental health practitioners be more efficient, responsive, and cost-effective in meeting the therapeutic needs of children and youth who have been over-represented in higher levels and higher cost care that is not effectively meeting their needs.

- Strategies and tools learned from NTI can help mental health practitioners expand their toolkit, gaining confidence and competence to support families at all stages of their

development.

- Coaching is available to NTI participants to support their application and integration of learning into practice.

The Benefits for Families Served:

- Adoption-competent staff expands access to care for foster, adoptive, guardianship and kinship families, enabling them to receive support from professionals that understand their needs and challenges.

- Adoption-competent staff can help caregivers develop parenting strategies that will enhance their competence in meeting the needs of their children and youth resulting in improved caregiver retention and family stability.

- Families have access to adoption-competent staff to support them when needs arise – to minimize crises.

The Impact of NTI Training on Professionals

- After completion of training, participants experienced statistically significant gains across all 10 modules.

- For NTI mental health participants during the period October 2023-March 2024, the modules with the lowest pre-test scores included Attachment, Positive Identity Formation and Assessment and Treatment Planning – acknowledging gaps in knowledge around these core issues.

- 94% of participants expressed satisfaction with the training and 98% indicated the training was relevant to their work.

- 92% of mental health participants indicated they had developed new skills and 96% indicated the training "will enhance the effectiveness of my work with children, youth and families."

Why Should You Consider the NTI Training?

- Training is web-based, self-paced – allowing systems to support learning at anytime and anywhere.

- 26.5 NASW and NBCC approved continuing education credits provided for free when accessing the training via the CASE Institute Learning Management System (participants

must pass module post-tests f to receive certificate and CE credits).

- Participants have access to free coaching as they progress through the training to support application and integration of learning into practice.

- Downloadable resources, handouts and tools are available throughout the training that can be used in practice with children, youth and families.

- NTI Training is free.

For more info: www.adoptionsupport.org/nti