School-Based Mental Health Professionals Training - 6 CEs

Better Outcomes for Children & Youth!

Overview, Modules, Lessons, and Learning Objectives:

The School Based Mental Health Professionals Training – 6 CEs provides the foundational knowledge, values and skills school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and school-based therapists need to effectively support the mental health and well-being of children experiencing foster care, adoption, kinship care and/or significant separation and loss of birth family, community, and culture.

Adapted from the nationally recognized National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training developed by C.A.S.E., core competencies include understanding and addressing the complex and often nuanced mental health needs of children who have experienced significant losses and/or trauma. This includes understanding the impact of loss and grief and early adverse experiences on well-being and development. It includes foundational information, best practices, and therapeutic strategies to support children of all ages in the school setting, including strategies to assist educators and educational staff to effectively support children with challenging behaviors.

Module 1: A Case for Adoption Competency *(2 hours and 40 minutes)*

Module 1 provides an overview of the training and makes the case for the need for competency in working with children, youth, and families experiencing foster care, adoption, guardianship, or kinship care. Lessons in this module orient participants to the training; highlight the guiding principles that provide the foundation for work with children and families from an adoption or guardianship lens; and introduce salient clinical issues for children and youth and their families.

Lesson 1: Course Overview and The Need for Adoption Competency *(30 minutes)*
Lesson 2: The Language of Adoption *(15 minutes)*

CENTER FOR ADOPTION SUPPORT AND EDUCATION C.A.S.E.
nurture. inspire. empower.

Lesson 3: Guiding Principles That Support Effective Mental Health Practice *(40 minutes)*
Lesson 4: Achieving and Maintaining Permanence Is Key to Well-Being and Mental Health *(30 minutes)*
Lesson 5: Core Clinical Issues in Adoption and their Link to Mental Health *(45 minutes)*

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of Module 1, the trainee will:

- Acquire appropriate expectations for this course based on an accurate understanding of the focus, nature, and main goals of the training.
- Identify core knowledge, values, and skills that characterize an adoption competent mental health professional.
- Recognize the importance of using positive adoption language.
- Identify and integrate into your practice the guiding principles that inform adoption competent clinical interventions to address the unique mental health needs of children, youth, and their families.
- Understand the negative impact of impermanence on mental health and adjustment in adoptive and guardianship families.
- Identify the salient clinical issues associated with the various adoption and guardianship options.

Module 2: Understanding and Addressing the Complex Mental Health Needs of Children & Youth in Adoptive and Guardianship Families *(1 hour 35 minutes)*

Module 2 provides context for the complex mental health needs of children experiencing foster care, kinship care, adoption, or guardianship and the importance of helping children/youth understand their life stories. Lessons focus on limitations of current diagnostic and medication practices commonly used with children with foster and/or institutional care experiences; skills and techniques for helping children/youth make sense of their adoption/guardianship stories; challenges related to developmental stages of the adoptive family life cycle; and how to collaborate effectively with other professionals to support appropriate treatment and intervention.

Lesson 1: The Big Picture: Understanding the Factors that Shape Children's Adjustment in Adoptive and Guardianship Families *(25 minutes)*
Lesson 2: The Impact of Early Childhood Experiences on Mental Health *(35 minutes)*
Lesson 3: Issues in Diagnosis and Treatment of Adopted Children's Mental Health Needs *(35 minutes)*

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of Module 2, the trainee will:

- Identify and understand the risk and protective factors for children and families through the lens of adoption and guardianship and integrate the impact of risk and protective factors through the exploration of case examples
- Understand how early life experiences and risk and protective factors impact a child's or youth's mental health and well-being.
- Conduct assessment through an adoption and guardianship lens.
- Identify and describe the core mental health issues that are addressed in adoption competent clinical interventions with children, youth, and their adoptive and guardianship families.
- Recognize limitations of current diagnostic assessment and medication practices commonly used with children and youth with foster and/or institutional care experiences.
- Identify and describe strategies for effective collaboration with child welfare and other professionals that promote information sharing, appropriate treatment planning and intervention, and parental involvement in the therapeutic process.

Module 3 – The Impact of Loss and Grief Experiences on Children's & Youth's Mental Health *(1 hour 50 minutes)*

Module 3 focuses on the central role of loss and grief in foster care, adoption, guardianship, or kinship care and how ambiguous and unresolved loss, abandonment, rejection, and disenfranchised grief impact the mental health of children. Lessons will emphasize children's developmental understanding of loss and how loss and grief manifests developmentally, behaviorally, and emotionally. We will review therapeutic strategies and tools for helping children grieve and heal; identify special issues in relative caregiving; and highlight the importance of, and provide strategies for, supporting openness and maintaining family, community, and cultural connections to mitigate losses.

Lesson 1: The Impact of Ambiguous Loss and Unresolved Grief on Emotional Adjustment and Mental Health *(35 minutes)*

Lesson 2: Understanding Loss and Grief Issues in Adoption in the Context of Developmental Stages, Emotional Adjustments, and Mental Health of Children & Youth *(35 minutes)*

Lesson 3: Impact of Abandonment and Rejection on Children's Mental Health *(40 minutes)*

***Learning Objectives*.**

Upon completion of Module 3, the trainee will:

- To identify and describe principles and key features of grief models and the mental health impacts and behaviors associated with ambiguous loss and unresolved grief
- Describe the child's developmental understanding of loss in adoption.
- Describe the stages of grief for a child and common behaviors associated with those losses.
- Identify the impact of abandonment and rejection on mental health, how it presents clinically, how to support children through separation, and implications for therapeutic intervention.