

# Preserving and Strengthening Adoption through Case Management

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# Mission Statement:

It is vital that all service providers working with the adoptive and subsidized families establish and maintain an atmosphere of team work, unconditional support, mutual respect, and an overall collaborative approach.

# I. Introduction

- A. Why Case Management services are a “must”? (group discussion)
- B. “ Multiple Transitions: *A Young Child’s Point of View on Foster Care and Adoption.*” Video by Michael Trout, Director The Infant-Parent Institute. Champaign, Illinois C 1997
- C. Reaction to the video

## II. What Should Case Management Services Look Like for Adoptive Families?

- Case management services should be:
  - Client centered
  - Strength based
  - Realistic
  - Consistent
  - Focused on client's current and future needs (short/long term)

# What are Case Management Services in Post Adoption?

## A. Child & Family Team Meetings “CFT” (*It takes a village...*)

- Are attended by adoptive parents
- Family members
- Close family friends
- Clergy
- School personnel
- Case workers
- Advocates
- Therapists
- Any public/private service provider involved with the family

# What are the goals of the CFT meetings?

- Evaluate needs
- Provide support to both families & providers
- Empower parents in their role
- Dispel feelings of loneliness & hopelessness
- Remove the stigma of seeking help
- Help diminish social isolation
- Ensure that family is kept together
- Help the child reach his/her own potential
- Help parents and adoptees deal with mental health and physical issues

## B. Respite Services are...

- Overnights with family or friends
- Time out with family or friends
- Play days and outings
- Camps and lessons

# Respite Services

- Give the family and the child time to regroup
- Provide the parents “adult time”
- Provide the child positive experiences
- Allow the family to refocus on the child’s strengths
- Give the child reassurance that there are other “big people” willing to help and support him/her and their family



# Respite Services are NOT....

- Baby sitting
- Time with strangers...this can make attachment more difficult
- To be centered around video games and/or television
- A punishment
- To be crisis oriented

## C. Mentoring Services are...

- Provided by approved and selected individuals matched to meet the child's needs
- Provided in the community
- To model appropriate socializations
- To assist child with school work
- To provide children with outings or activities the parents may not be able to offer their children due to age or health issues

# Mentoring Services are NOT....

- Long term
- Over-night
- Counseling
- Surrogate parenting
- To indulge children's "wants"
- The children's "Santa Claus"
- The children's "best friend"

## D. School Advocacy

- Ensures that the child's academic needs are being met
- Makes sure that child's emotional and behavioral needs are addressed
- Advocates for services needed
- Empowers parents' involvement in their child's educational plan

# School Advocacy... cont.

- Empowers parents to become educated advocates for their children
- Increases communication between parents and the school system
- Follows through with IEPs & 504s implementation
- Dispels mutual misconceptions between parents and school personnel about services, the family, or the children

# School Advocacy is NOT ...

- To be retaliatory
- To find “got cha!” moments
- Meant to take the place of an empowered parent
- To be viewed as a “waste of time” for both the school or parents’

# E. Parent Education

- Love & Logic
- TBRI
- Educational Presentations  
Addressing Parenting needs
- Parents' Cafes

## F. Other Case Management Resources

- Any DHS in the community
- NAMI
- SRA (Special Recreation Association)
- Community Respite : Day Respite programs
- Local Agency on Aging



# Other Case Management Resources...cont.

- Special Olympics
- Office of Rehabilitation Services
- Grandparents raising grandchildren
- Helping hands
- Habitat for Humanity
- City Link & Rural transportation

## Other Case Management Resources ...cont.

- Prairie State Legal
- VA home assistance
- VFW (***Veterans of Foreign Wars***) programs
- The Lions Club
- Food Pantries
- Referrals to pharmaceutical programs
- Support Groups

# Other Case Management Resources ...

## cont.

- Community grief/loss programs
- Farm Bureau for support in rural areas
- Community Health Department
- Churches
- Community Crisis Responders Team
- Ombudsman office
- Services Coordination

### III. LINKAGE TO OTHER CASE MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

- Very important for adoption preservation that families are linked to case management resources in their community
- Good resources for new parents
- Decreases isolation
- Helps dispel stigma of seeking out help
- Excellent support for the children with developmental and behavioral needs
- Good transition services

## IV. BARRIERS TO UTILIZATION OF EXISTING CASE MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

- Cultural, religious, socio-economic, ethnic
- Transportation
- Isolation
- Parents' feelings of rejection resulting from their children's behaviors

# BARRIERS TO UTILIZATION OF EXISTING CASE MANAGEMENT RESOURCES...cont.

- Parents' own misconceptions about how others perceive their children's behaviors
- Parents' falling into the "perfect parent syndrome"
- Parents' preconceived idea that their child would be "perfect"

# V. How To Get Through Barriers in Rural Areas

- Obtain all the data for the adoptive families in rural areas
- Contact existing community supports to reach out to families in the area
- Creation of “phone trees”(cell & land-line)

# How To Get Through Barriers in Rural Areas ...cont.

- Establishing a “child care share” rural network
- Establishing and maintaining an updated car pooling directory
- Creating “Travelling” support meetings
- Establishing periodic “support groups” linked by teleconferencing



# How To Get Through Barriers in Rural Areas ...cont.

- Establishing “buddy” systems for parent support
- “Pound the Ground!”
- In-services at churches and schools
- Newsletter: “round-Robin”, traveling newsletter

# VI. SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

- Educating adoptive families and providers about the case management resources in existence in their communities is vital to empower adoptive families and dispel stigmas associated with seeking help vis-à-vis the challenges they face.
- Case management services are an integral part in the stabilization of the adoptive family

# SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS...cont.

- Thinking “outside the box” provides opportunities to generate a vast list of case management resources to assist adoptive parents in both urban and rural areas, especially when there is a scarcity of services in the latter.

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*“My birth mother brought me into this world, but it was my adoptive parents who gave me life,”* Christina Romo