

7 CORE ISSUES for ADOPTED CHILDREN and ADOPTIVE PARENTS

Adoptee	Adoptive Parent
<p><u>Loss</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fears ultimate abandonment • Loss of biological, genetic, and cultural history • Issues of holding on and letting go 	<p><u>Loss</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infertility equates with loss of self and immortality • Issues of entitlement lead to fear of loss of child and overprotection
<p><u>Rejection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement for adoption as personal rejection • Can only be “chosen” if first rejected • Issues of self-esteem • Anticipates rejection • Misperceives situations 	<p><u>Rejection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling of being ostracized because of procreation difficulties • May make partner the scapegoat • May expel adopted child to avoid anticipated rejection
<p><u>Guilt/Shame</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels deserving of misfortune • Ashamed of being different • May take defensive stance • Anger 	<p><u>Guilt/Shame</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashamed of infertility • May believe childlessness is a curse or punishment • Religious crisis
<p><u>Grief</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grief overlooked in childhood or blocked by adult leading to depression and/or acting out • May grieve lack of “fit” in adoptive family 	<p><u>Grief</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grieve loss of “fantasy” child • Unresolved grief may block attachment to adopted child • May experience adopted child’s grief as rejection
<p><u>Identity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficits in information about birth parents, birthplace, etc. may impede integration of identity • May seek identity in early pregnancies or extreme behaviors in order to create a sense of belonging 	<p><u>Identity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences a diminished sense of continuity of self • “Role Handicap” – I am a parent/I am not a parent
<p><u>Intimacy & Relationships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fears getting close and risking reenactment of earlier losses • Concerns over possible incest (unrecognized sibling) • Bonding issues may lower capacity for intimacy 	<p><u>Intimacy & Relationships</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unresolved grief over losses may lead to intimacy and marital problems • May avoid closeness with adopted child to avoid loss
<p><u>Control/Gains</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption alters life course • Aware of not being a party to initial adoption decisions, in which adults made life-altering choices • Haphazard nature of adoption removes cause-and-effect continuum 	<p><u>Control/Gains</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption experiences lead to “learned helplessness” where sense of mastery is linked to procreation • Lack of initiative

Retrieved from: <http://www.adoption-support.org/res/7core.php>

Successful Adoptive Families <i>Holt International Children Services</i>	Successful Adoptive Parents <i>Spaulding for Children</i>
• Have realistic expectations for the adoption	• Flexible family expectations
• Are fully aware of the child's needs	• Tolerance for the child's rejection
• Have a proven ability to handle problems	• Ability to set structure and limits in a caring way
• Are flexible, optimistic, and have a sense of humor	• Sense of humor • Flexible family roles
• Have the ability to maintain a commitment to the child in spite of challenges	• Parenting commitment – ability to fully claim the child as theirs
• Can appreciate the small gains the child makes	• Ability to use resources and meet personal needs
• Are comfortable using resources and treatment services when needed	• Tolerance for their own ambivalent and negative feelings about the child
• Can attach and bond to others	• Ability to delay parenting gratification
• Have strong marital relationships	• Openness to connections with birth family
• Maintain an open communication style	

Characteristics of Foster Parents who Do Not Adopt Successfully
• Unresolved losses in the past and present, resulting in a need to revisit past relationships and an inability to meet the child's needs
• Possessiveness of the child and an unwillingness to acknowledge and work with important people from the child's past
• Rigidity in the family system
• Desperation for a child, resulting in unrealistic expectations of foster care and adoption
• High stress and anxiety levels
• Aggressiveness
• Power and control issues



Child Wellbeing Project

What you need to know: Implementation Road Map

- Review Project History: Understanding Success Coach Service Development

 - Select a Core Team** with a lead or co-lead to facilitate completion of the Stakeholder Readiness Survey and Agency Capacity Assessment. These assessments help determine if Post Care Services are a good and manageable fit for your agency.

 - Stakeholder Readiness Survey:** Determine if staff and community partners value and need post care services—goodness of fit for the agency
 - Hold Focus Groups to determine what stakeholder view as needs (suggested groups below)
 - Biological Parents
 - Adoptive Parents
 - Teens or Adults who experienced foster care
 - Guardians
 - Social Workers/Social Work Supervisors (Adoption, Foster Care)
 - Community Partners (Therapists, Eligibility Services Representatives)
 - Arrange for childcare during focus groups
 - Ensure location of focus groups in neutral, especially for families who have experienced the system
 - Complete the Stakeholder Readiness Survey
 - Survey Monkey to Staff
 - Compile results and share with staff
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- Agency Capacity Assessment:** Determine if the agency has the current capacity to implement the service with fidelity to the model and highlight areas where additional work is needed to assure readiness
 - Core Team works through assessment during a half-day retreat or over the course of several meetings
 - Compile assessment results and determine if there are areas where capacity needs to be enhanced
 - Plan work to enhance identified areas

SUCCESS COACH SERVICE

Success Coach Service Description

- Read through the Summary of the Success Coach Service (more detailed information is located in the Success Coach Manual)

Staff Selection

- Key staff need to be selected—typically the Project Manager and Supervisor are selected or hired first so that they can make the selection of the Success Coaches
 - Project Manager—It is important to determine how a post care unit fits into your agency. This person may already be part of the agency and post care is an additional responsibility or this may be a new position.
 - Supervisor—This position will be a new supervisory position in your agency because he or she will be supervising a new team.
 - Success Coaches
 - Support Staff (Administrative Assistant/Data Manager)—Support staff responsibilities can be incorporated into other positions.

Training

- Review Training Plan
- Ensure you have access to trainings or similar trainings
- Schedule all trainings that need to occur before service is implemented

Coaching

- Ensure Success Coach Supervisor is trained to provide conceptual feedback (need to note where the supervisor can acquire that training)
- Review Coaching Plan and adjust to meet your agencies needs

Program Reviews

- Identify key stakeholders to participate in Program Reviews and create a set date and time for these meetings. Ex. 3rd Wednesday of the month at 9:00 am (stakeholders include representatives from the adoption unit and foster care)
- Review Program Review Protocol (formatting may need to be adjusted but the content is essential to the review process)

Data Collection

- Access database is available to you
- You will need a programmer to modify the database to meet your agency needs
- Templates are available for reports to help in the program review process

Fidelity to the Model

- Review all fidelity checklist and ensure Success Coaches are familiar with all expected outcomes
- Review Coaching Plan for how fidelity reviews will be completed and monitored



EDUCATIONAL ADVOCATE SERVICE

Educational Advocate Service Description

- Read through the Summary of the Educational Advocate Service (more detailed information is located in the Success Coach Manual)

Staff Selection

- Key staff need to be selected—Educational Advocate
 - School district representatives should be identified for each school system
 - School designees, while not staff, will need to be identified at each school

Training

- Review Training Plan
- Ensure you have access to trainings or similar trainings

Coaching

- Review Coaching Plan and adjust to meet your agencies needs

Program Reviews

- Identify key stakeholders to participate in quarterly Program Reviews and create a set date and time for these meetings. Ex. 3rd Wednesday of the month at 9:00 am (stakeholders include representatives from school systems, foster care, adoptions)
- Review Program Review Protocol (formatting may need to be adjusted but the content is essential to the review process)
- Identify key stakeholders to attend a quarterly Educational Meeting to discuss systems issues and provide updates on key changes in the school systems and social services

Data Collection

- Access database is available to you
- You will need a programmer to modify the database to meet your agency needs
- Templates are available for reports to help in the program review process

Fidelity to the Model

- Educational Advocate checklist should be modified to meet the program modifications in your agency
- Review Coaching Plan for how fidelity reviews will be completed and monitored