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family center

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## For Better or Worse: Why ASAP Services are Critical to Keeping Adoptive Families Intact

Kindal Akers & Michelle Whaley

# Who We Are

- The Adoption Support & Preservation (ASAP) Program was developed by Harmony Family Center in 2004
- The program was designed as a result of a comprehensive needs assessment which confirmed there was a significant lack of pre and post adoption services for families
- ASAP is funded by the Tennessee Department of Children's Services through Title IV-E assistance



# Who We Are

- ASAP provides a seamless continuum of services throughout the state
- Families who have adopted or are pursuing adoption through the child welfare system in Tennessee are eligible for ASAP services at no cost
- Historically, our ASAP program has experienced less than 1% adoption disruption rate



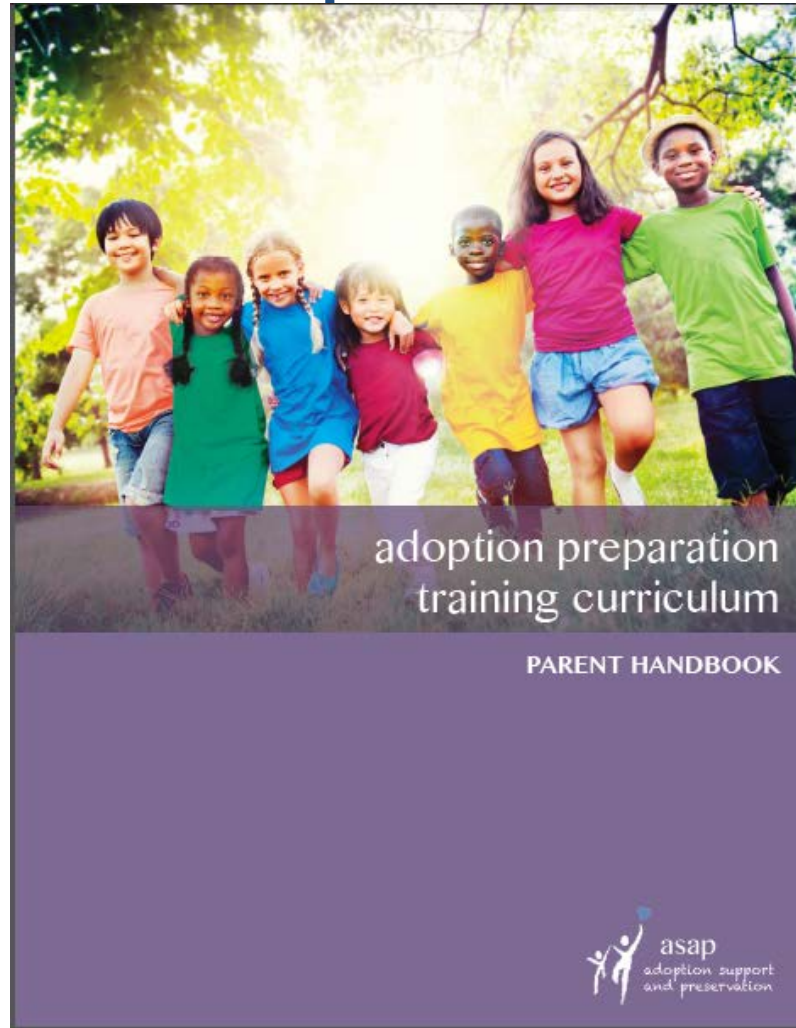
# What We Provide

- Statewide Pre and Post Adoption Services
  - Adoption Preparation Training
  - Adoption Preparation In-home Counseling
  - In Home Family and Individual Counseling Post-Adopt
  - Crisis Intervention Support
  - F.U.S.E. Foster & Adoptive Family Groups
  - Adoption-Focused Educational Offerings
  - Relief Team Building
  - Case Management and Community Referrals
  - Adoptive Family Camps
  - Therapeutic Day Camps
  - Adoptive Mom's Retreat
  - Animal-Assisted Therapy



# Pre-Adopt Services

## Adoption Preparation Training



Property of Harmony Family Center



# Adoption Preparation Training

- The APT Curriculum was created by Harmony Family Center's ASAP Program in 2008 with revisions in 2010 and Spring 2017.
- The model includes (4) classroom/group psycho-education focused sessions and (4) individual in-home sessions led by an ASAP clinician.
- The training assists prospective adoptive parents in deepening their awareness and understanding about themselves and the child they hope to adopt.
- The Curriculum addresses issues such as: lifetime commitment, motivations and expectations, adoption loss, relationships with birth family, attachment process, importance of claiming and belonging, trauma and brain development, trauma informed parenting, relief team development and the importance of self-care for the caregiver.



# Adoption Preparation In-home Counseling

Individualized, child specific pre-adoption counseling services  
Minimum of four (4) in-home counseling sessions with the family.

- Contingency plan and relief team development
- Life-books and transitional items/issues
- Grief and loss
- Child specific challenges
- Crisis plan development
- Behavior modification
- Self-care for caregiver
- Commitment for a lifetime
- Fears and worries
- Normalization of experiences and feelings
- Parent psycho-education
- Community resources and referrals



# Post-Adopt In-home Services

- Master's level clinicians provide intensive in home services
- ASAP services are family focused, trauma-informed, and evidence-based
- Parent support and Psycho-education is provided
- Treatment modalities, approaches, and assessment tools include:
  - TBRI (Trust Based Relationship Intervention)
  - ARC (Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency)
  - TF-CBT (Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy)
  - NMT (Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics)
  - SMART (Sensory Motor Affect Regulation Therapy)
  - EAP/ EAL (Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and Learning)
  - PAWS for Kids (Pet Assisted Wellness and Support)
  - Circle of Security
  - Narrative Therapy
  - Theraplay
  - PACE (Playful, Attunement, Curiosity, Empathy)
  - EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing)
  - Trauma-Informed Yoga

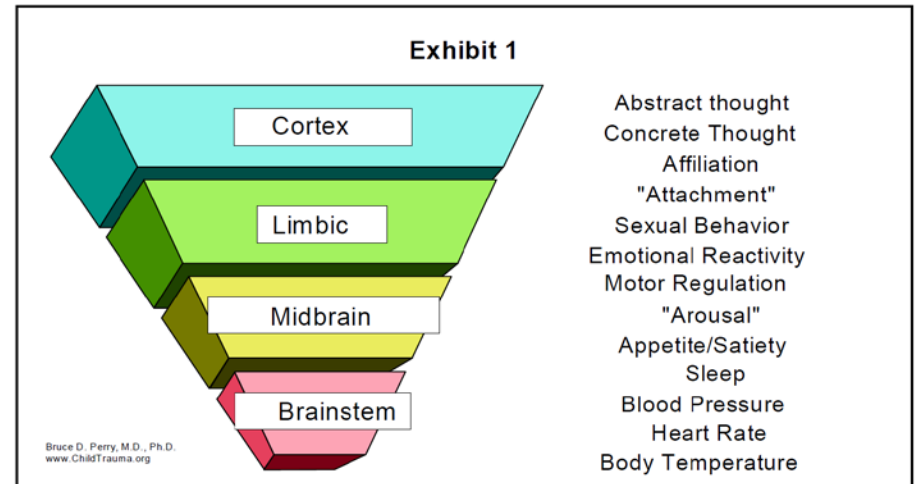




# NMT Assessment

## Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics

- Assessment
- Metric
- Recommendations



# NMT Brain Map

Client (14 years, 3 months)

Report Date: 12/4/2010

|    |    |   |    |   |    |
|----|----|---|----|---|----|
| 4  | 8  | 7 | 2  | 2 | 9  |
| 11 | 10 | 7 | 2  | 6 | 10 |
| 3  | 3  | 8 | 1  | 8 | 8  |
|    | 10 | 5 | 2  | 3 |    |
|    | 11 | 6 | 4  | 3 |    |
|    |    | 4 | 4  |   |    |
|    |    | 8 | 10 |   |    |
|    |    | 9 | 6  |   |    |

Age Typical - 14 to 16

|    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| 12 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 11 |
| 11 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 12 |
|    | 11 | 11 | 11 | 12 |    |
|    | 12 | 12 | 12 | 11 |    |
|    |    | 12 | 12 |    |    |
|    |    | 12 | 12 |    |    |
|    |    | 12 | 12 |    |    |



# SMART

## Sensory Motor Arousal Regulation Treatment

The Trauma Center at Justice  
Resource Institute  
Brookline, Massachusetts



Regulation and Trauma  
Processing



Tactile, Proprioceptive and  
Vestibular Input



# Music and Movement

Yoga  
Drumming  
Streamline Dance



# Equine Program

## Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy offers the following benefits:

- Creates a safe, motivating environment for learning & healing
- Builds the therapeutic relationship between the horse, child, parents, and staff
- Fosters an ability to form healthy, secure attachments
- Teaches empathy, encourages responsibility
- Enhances problem-solving, social, and communication skills
- Increases sense of self-efficacy
- Promotes teamwork and individual leadership
- Rhythmic, Regulating, and Relational
- Provides sensory input



# Paws for Kids

## Pet Assisted Wellness and Support

- Paws for Kids trains emotional support dogs for adopted children.

Paws for Kids is based on research that shows:

- Children who are emotionally attached to their pets learn trust and build healthy relationships
- Animals provide a safe, nonjudgmental and nonthreatening companionship.
- The trust, patience and unconditional love of a dog can help a child begin healing from the trauma of abuse and neglect, buffer the effects of stress and promote emotional attachment.
- Dogs selected for the program are professionally trained using the AKC Canine Good Citizen program.
- Once our dogs have successfully completed training they will be matched by Harmony Family Counselors with a child/family through a therapeutic process.





# FUSE Groups

## Families United Supported Engaged

- Monthly support group for foster and adoptive families
- Meal Provided
- Parent Education
- Therapeutic activities for children ages 5 and up
- One group per month in each Grand Region – 13 across the state



# Community Education

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## Training and Education Coordinator

Provides trauma informed training/education in the community:

Daycares

Schools

Churches

State and National Conferences

- Webinars for Parents after hours





# Adoptive Family Camps

- Family Camp is designed to support the healing and growth of families. While at camp, families participate in activities designed to promote a deeper understanding of one another, reconnecting in meaningful, lasting ways. Camp is an opportunity to connect with other families who share a similar journey and experience.
- **Activities include:**
  - Regulating activities (transitional, sensory station)
  - Low ropes and problem solving games
  - Equine and animal-assisted support
  - Crafts
  - Drumming
  - Yoga
  - Nature walks
  - Climbing wall
  - Parent education groups



# Therapeutic Day Camps

- Staffed by clinicians
- Structured, well-balanced schedule
- Regulating activities built in:
  - >Yoga
  - >Equine
  - >Sensory Input
  - >Music & Movement
  - >Problem-solving and outdoor activities



# Other Camps



- Family Justice Center
- Adoptive Mom Retreat
- Independent Living
- Emerald Youth Camp
- Grand Family Camp





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## Questions?



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Thank You for Attending!

For more information about  
Harmony's ASAP program  
please visit:  
[harmonyfamilycenter.org](http://harmonyfamilycenter.org)