Helping Adoptive Families Thrive

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Psychologists play a critical role in facilitating healthy adoption experiences for children and their adoptive families by addressing both pre-adoption and post-adoption needs.

1. **Pre-Adoption Support**:
   - **Assessing Motivation**: Psychologists like David Brodzinsky, PhD, help prospective parents explore their reasons for adopting, ensuring their motivations align with the child's best interests. They address the complexities of adopting, particularly when the child has a history of adversity, and prepare parents for behavioral and emotional challenges.
   - **Views on Family Building**: Psychologists assist parents in understanding adoption as building a family that often includes open relationships with the birth family. Open adoption, now constituting 95% of adoptions, fosters positive relationships and strengthens the child's identity.
   - **Screening Suitability**: Psychologists help agencies assess if prospective parents are well-suited for adoption, identifying potential concerns such as serious mental health issues or unrealistic expectations.

2. **Post-Adoption Support**:
   - **Communication Skills**: Effective communication is central to adoptive family success. Psychologists teach parents to discuss adoption openly and respectfully, starting from an early age. Books and open conversations help children feel supported and develop a cohesive family identity.
   - **Navigating Open Adoption**: Psychologists guide families in managing evolving relationships with birth families, helping all parties navigate this process with empathy and flexibility. Support from adoption-competent providers ensures these arrangements are beneficial.
   - **Addressing Complex Histories**: Psychologists encourage realistic yet sensitive discussions about a child's origins, avoiding demonization of birth parents and supporting the child's sense

of self.

By fostering open, empathetic communication and addressing the unique dynamics of adoption, psychologists can help build stronger, healthier adoptive families.

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