

# Understanding Permanency Competence for Tribal Nations

## What does It Mean to Be Permanency Competent?

Simply put, being permanency competent means a professional and/or child-serving system has the knowledge and skills to provide services that are responsive to the unique needs of children and families who experience the child welfare system. Permanency means more than placement. It means helping children and families build secure attachments, maintain healthy connections, and navigate challenges over time with understanding and compassion. Permanency thrives when systems and professionals work together to strengthen families through every stage.

Experiencing separation and loss and navigating a permanency journey impacts every part of a child's identity. The core issues (including loss, grief, rejection, guilt, shame, and identity) can surface at different stages of life for children and their families.

Permanency-competent professionals are trained to understand children's behaviors in the context of their relationships and experiences within the child welfare system. In their practice, these professionals respond empathetically to the underlying needs of children and families through family-centered, trauma-informed care. By building core competencies, practitioners can guide families toward understanding, resilience, and connection.

## Advancing Permanency Competence in Tribal Nations

Permanency competent care transforms lives not just for families today but for generations to come. The **National Center for Adoption Competent Mental Health Services (NCACMHS)** and the **Navajo Nation** are raising awareness about the need for mental health care that understands the child welfare experience. It's essential that professionals recognize the impact of early trauma, separation, and loss—and are equipped to meet the complex needs of children and families.

Together, we're helping to build a workforce that supports healing, stability, and lasting change.



## *Tools we use to advance adoption competence:*

### **Technical Assistance**

### **Training for Adoption Competency (TAC)**

### **National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI)**

#### **4 curricula:**

- Child Welfare Professionals
- Child Welfare Supervisors
- Mental Health Professionals
- School-based Professionals

#### **Transfer of learning through coaching to implement the skills and knowledge**

## *Skill-building Through the National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI)*

### NTI TRAINING HELPS YOU HELP CHILDREN & FAMILIES WITH:

|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                          |                                                                        |                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Increased knowledge of the complexities of kinship care, foster care, guardianship, and adoption. | Enhanced professional skills needed to promote stability and permanency for children and their families. | Improved capacity to apply trauma-informed, attachment-based casework. | Enhanced ability of supervisors to support staff in applying newly acquired skills |
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## *The Expertise Gained Through NTI Supports Family Stability and Permanency*

### TRAINING CONTENT MODULES INCLUDE:

|                                       |                                                                                                                      |                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Case for Adoption Competency      | Understanding & Addressing the Complex Mental Health Needs of Children & Youth in Adoptive and Guardianship Families | Enhancing Attachment                            | Loss & Grief                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Impact of Trauma on Brain Development | Positive Identity Formation                                                                                          | Maintaining Children's Stability and Well-being | <br><b>National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative</b><br><small>Advancing Practice for Permanency &amp; Well-Being™</small> |



"The curriculum addresses loss and grief in a way that honors the tribal experience of intergenerational grief and loss." **Terry Cross, Senior Advisor at the National Indian Child Welfare Association**, outlines how beneficial the NTI training is for professionals working in Tribal communities. The curriculum also addresses a child's need for belonging, not just with caregivers but with their entire family, their clan, tribal community, and friends.

Image: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/terry-cross-1577775/>