

Handout: Finding the Right Therapist

Parents can call prospective therapists or schedule an initial interview to find out basic information. Some therapists offer an initial brief consultation that is free of charge. Parents should start by giving the clinician a brief description of the concern or problem for which they need help. The following are some suggested questions to determine the level of adoption competency:

What is your experience with adoption/guardianship and adoption/guardianship issues? (Parents should be specific about the issues that impact their problems, such as open adoption, transracial adoption, search for or strained relationships with birth family, attachment difficulties, etc.)

How long have you been in practice and what degrees, licenses or certifications do you have?

Have you worked with other children who are adopted/in guardianship?

What continuing clinical training have you had on adoption issues?

Do you include parents and other family members in the therapeutic process?

Do you prefer to work with the entire family or only with children?

Do you give parents regular reports on a child's progress?

Can you estimate the timeframe for the course of therapy?

What approach to therapy or clinical models do you use?

What changes in the daily life of the child and family might we expect to see as a result of the therapy?

Do you work with teachers, juvenile justice personnel, daycare providers, and other adults in the child's life, when appropriate?

National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI)
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