

PACT
(pre/post adoption consulting and training)
Dr. Joyce Maguire Pavao
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Certificate Program in Adoption Therapy
Boston Course
Winter- Spring, 2014
Pre-Registration Required
Three-session course \$1125.00
(Two last sessions \$900.00)
MC/Visa or check accepted
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FIRST SESSION

Friday, February 28, 2014 9-2p.m.

Assessing, Intervening and Creating a Treatment Plan

This module will introduce diagnosis and assessment as they pertain to addressing issues commonly experienced by adopted children and their families. Our goal in these sessions, are not to pathologize adoption or any member of the adoption triad, but to acknowledge the critical importance of appropriate assessment and interventions which are clinically sound and promote adoption competent practice.

This introduction will refer to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) to provide the theoretical and skill basis for this session. Unique to this module will be an exploration of the underlying trauma experienced by children who have experienced abuse, and/or neglect in addition to the separation from their birth families. Participants also will distinguish between trauma and dissociative disorders-such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder-that may emulate other trauma-related diagnoses. Participants will explore the various interventions mental health professionals can use and strategies to offer to parents in order to assist the child in coping with trauma-related symptoms and behaviors.

Assessment, Diagnosis, and Intervention: Attachment and Bonding

Attachment issues are endemic to children who have experienced abuse, neglect, and separation from primary caregivers. Building on the theories and strategies covered in Session VI, this module will apply diagnostic assessment techniques to identify and address attachment disorders vs. normal issues of trust/mistrust. This module will present attachment-oriented theory, address how to rule out or diagnose reactive attachment disorder (RAD), and how to explore the various interventions mental health professionals can use and offer to parents to facilitate their child's attachment. In addition, we will look at the attachment styles of the adults and how those may enhance or decrease the attachment process of the child.

All sessions will involve Case Consultation and participants must come with cases to discuss.

Impact of Abuse and Neglect on Child Development The experience of children adopted through the child welfare system shapes their development-from infancy through adulthood. This module compares normal childhood development and its tasks with developmental interruptions and transformations resulting from childhood abuse, neglect, and trauma. It will reference recent brain research to explore the impact of these traumas on the child's psychological and physiological development. The module also will study the impact of abuse, neglect and trauma on the parent's as well as the child's attachment style and process and the behaviors that can result, and in will teach interventions that mental health professionals and parents can use to facilitate positive developmental progress. Medical issues specific to maltreated children will also be address in this session.

Clinical Practice/Therapeutic Strategies with Adoptive Triad Members

Participants will integrate the concepts and skills they have learned throughout the course through participation in interactive case studies of adoptive families. This consulting module will also provide an opportunity for students to consider various theoretical approaches and how they address issues specific to children with histories of abuse, neglect and trauma, as well as to the families who raise them.

All sessions will involve Case Consultation and participants must come with cases to discuss.

SECOND SESSION

March 21, 2014 - 9:00 to 2:00

Child Centered and Sensitive Treatment in Adoption

Family centered, child focused practice is the norm in today's therapeutic work with children, youth, and families. This session-- using film, role plays, and discussion-- will focus on promoting and assisting therapists in developing adoption sensitive and competent treatment for members of the adoption triad and others connected to that family who may seek their assistance.

Clinical Practice with Diverse Children, Youth and Families

Issues of difference, identity, and belonging affect adopted children, birth parents and adoptive parents alike. Birth parents have been parents to a child, at least during gestation, but are no longer the parent of that child after adoption. Adoptive parents may feel they are different from biological parents because they did not give birth to this

child. Children feel different because of their histories and connections to two families and the feelings of loss and lost information that is a part of their story. These differences may be compounded by additional issues of diversity brought on by transracial or transcultural adoptions, adoption by gay or lesbian couples, and/or adoption by a child's relatives. This module will explore the therapeutic implications for working with diverse families.

All sessions will involve Case Consultation and participants must come with cases to discuss

THIRD SESSION

Friday, April 25, 2014 - 9:00 to 2:00

Search and Reunion Issues for Adoption Triad Members

Search and reunion-- two very separate issues-- need to be viewed on a continuum. The continuum of closed adoption, open adoption, internal search, external search, minor search, adult searches, and a plethora of reunion options.

Although the search process can begin at any point in one's life, and is really an ongoing internal process for everyone (adopted or not), school age children begin to understand the implications that are inherent in not living with one's birth family. Many children start to feel a sense of loss for not being with their birth parents. Certainly this is true for children who are adopted as school-age children or older; but even if a child is adopted or fostered as an infant, he or she will experience a sense of loss for their birth family and will grieve in their own unique way for this loss.

Often, as Brodzinsky and colleagues (1992, p. 71) note, "the adopted person doesn't even know why he feels so sad or so angry; the possibility that his feelings are related to grief is too abstract for him to grasp, and he suffers his emotions without being able to put a name on them." Almost all adopted persons search for their birth families.

Why did I get adopted? What is my birth family really like? I wonder if they ever think about me? - These are all questions that children and youth who are separated from their families ask out loud, or in the quiet privacy of self reflection. This search usually begins during the early school years and intellectual development progresses as the child grows. Some children delay this search until young adulthood, adulthood, and others, may never engage in a formal search, although a litany of changed, jobs, marriages etc. can be an outward manifestation of an inward search.

Although not all adopted persons will have a reunion with their birth families, all will search in some ways for them. Whether the search is a private one, not discussed with other family members, done on-line or by a visit to vital statistics, or one which is facilitated with assistance from a professional adoption search expert, all members of the adoption triad may need support and assistance in this process. This session, will address these critical issues from the perspectives of all members of the adoption triad: adopted person, adopted parent, and birth parent. We will also look at the bias and judgment that a professional can bring to session and how important it is to reflect on self as we work with these complex families.

All sessions will involve Case Consultation and participants must come with cases to discuss.