

# THERAPY FOR ADOPTION NEEDS



## FINDING A THERAPIST WHO UNDERSTANDS ADOPTION

Adoption comes with many unique, complex issues and challenges – for everyone included in the adoption constellation! It can be difficult to find a therapist who is trained in adoption-related needs or who has relevant previous experience in treatment methods recommended for adoption.

The best option is to find a therapist who has completed a competency program, such as Training for Adoption Competency (TAC), offered through the Center for Adoption Support and Education. TAC is a 72-hour specialty certification program for therapists and clinicians who work with members of the adoption constellation.



Adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents, and siblings can all benefit from counseling to explore the Seven Core Issues in Adoption: loss, grief, identity, rejection, shame and guilt, intimacy, and mastery and control. Secondary issues connected to these needs include: depression, anxiety, trauma, attachment, behavioral issues related to mental illness or prenatal substance exposure, Post-Adoption Depression, marital conflict, and poor coping skills.

Therapy can help you to understand your thoughts and feelings, and to develop healthier ways of coping with them.

– Daniel Gilbert



# ADVOCACY IS KEY

## QQ What to ask at your consultation?

Come prepared when meeting a new therapist for the first visit. Here are a few questions to ask:

- Have you gone through any specialty training related to adoption, such as Training for Adoption Competency?
- Do you have any experience working with members of the adoption triad?
- How experienced are you in addressing grief and loss, trauma, and attachment issues?
- What model of grief drives your client work when addressing grief and loss? (Ex: The Kubler-Ross model does not fit what many people experience with adoption, which often features chronic ambiguous or disenfranchised grief.)



- Do you have personal experience with adoption and, if so, how has it shaped your view on issues like the ones I need to work through? (Ex: A therapist who is an adoptive parent may struggle to support an adoptee or birth parent if their needs are at odds with the adoptive parent's preferences.)
- How supportive would you say you are regarding post-adoption contact between the members of an adoption triad?
- Overall, would you say you agree that adoption involves trauma?
- Which therapeutic model(s) do you use?  
Models recommended for adoption:

- Attachment-Focused Family Therapy
- Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP)
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy
- The 3-5-7 Model for Grief and Loss

For more details or additional assistance, reach out to your LFCS adoption caseworker or email [help@lfcs.org](mailto:help@lfcs.org).

