

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE THERAPISTS/COUNSELORS

Developed by Deborah N. Silverstein, L.C.S.W., and Sharon Roszia, M.S.

- Are well-versed (through specialized training and experience) in working with adopted youngsters and their families as well as relative caregiving families; are well-versed in the core issues and use them to normalize the family's situation
- Recognize that adoptive and other permanent care giving families are different (not better or worse) from traditional nuclear families
- Have knowledge of attachment issues and techniques for developmental re-parenting; attachment-based parenting and therapeutic parenting
- Believe that adoption and relative care are healthy, positive ways to build families; can see the long-term, not just the immediate "crisis;" see adoptive or other permanent family as a family for a lifetime
- Like children and adolescents and working with families; understand family systems and work with the whole family, not just the child as a client; are mindful of empowering the family as healer (empower parents) and avoid developing a dyadic relationship with the child (excluding the caregivers)
- Can differentiate among normal developmental issues, normal adoption adjustment, and atypical events
- Are able to use many modalities (forms) of therapy, including multiple non-verbal techniques; are creative and flexible
- Are aware of and use community resources and supports, e.g., adoptive parent or relative caregiver groups
- Work with parents and agency staff as a team
- Can avoid rescue fantasies (e.g. this family is not good enough for this child)
- Can be open, honest and genuine
- Can see family's and child's strengths as well as areas for work
- Are familiar with grief work in children and adults; able to tolerate hearing painful trauma accounts
- Have dealt with own anger toward birth parents for abuse or neglect; can accept and work with children's attachment to birth families and previous caregivers



ACT

**Participant
Resource
Notebook**

*Diversity,
Healing &
the Family*

**Practice
Tools**



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