

Vignette # 1 (page 7-69)

John and Margaret, Caucasian, age mid-thirties, are both career oriented and are getting ready to adopt a nine-month old baby of mixed race heritage (Caribbean-Canadian and Caucasian) who has been in the same foster family for five months. Margaret is quite driven and travels extensively for her job. She will be the primary wage earner when she and John adopt. John is able to have a flexible work schedule and stay home a large portion of each day. In discussions about timing and making a shift from their current lifestyle, Margaret seems convinced she can “make it all work out” but is not able to be specific about how her life will need to change. During the family assessment process, Margaret indicated she would take a large portion of each week to be available for leave time. As the baby is about to enter the family, however, Margaret seems less willing to plan time away from work. She becomes defensive when asked to map out a day with a young child under the age of one, saying that “Other couples don’t have to have it all nailed down”. John seems embarrassed by her reaction to the questions, and tries to make up for it by explaining, “She’s a great multi-tasker”. The transition meetings will need to be extensive, and though all within fifty miles of one another, the distance can feel stressful depending on the time of day on the road. Furthermore, there is a concurrent legal case plan and bi-monthly visitation with the birth parents is ordered. The visits are being held at a location that will require a two-hour round trip from the couple’s home.

Using the grid provided, please address the following questions:

- What are the areas to assess?
- What are the concerns?
- What are possible interventions to address the concerns before moving ahead with an adoptive placement?

Areas to Assess	Concerns	Possible Interventions

Vignette # 2 (page 7-70)

Elizabeth, Caucasian, and Judy, African-Canadian, age late thirties, previously applied to another agency to adopt and found the experience to be “miserable”. They left the family assessment process to come to your private adoption agency, and are now in the pre-adoption training workshops. Elizabeth and Judy have attended four classes, and despite the best efforts on the part of the trainers, they never participate in the training. They seem distant to the issues being addressed, and the only question they have asked is, “Why do you dwell so much on the negative?” Judy seems reluctant to talk about her childhood, and struggles with identifying who she might have been close to. She cannot think of clear ways to describe a close relationship. Elizabeth is often teary, or on the verge of expressing real worries, but never quite comes out with her thoughts. In general, it seems as if the couple is circling the perimeter of hearing the information, or allowing themselves to say what their fears are about. This is particularly true when it comes to reckoning with the issues of loss, and the potential impact on their relationship with children.

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Areas to Assess	Concerns	Possible Interventions

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Vignette # 3 (page 7-71)

Robert and Patricia, Chinese-Canadians, age early forties, plan to try “just one more” infertility treatment, but in order to not “waste” anymore time going by, have applied to adopt. Intellectually, the couple is facing the end of infertility treatments and wants to have a sense of doing something that is proactive and may yield a result. Their hope is low, but the prospect of adoption as a backup plan makes them feel more empowered. When the couple talks of adoption, Patricia seems braced to move forward, as if she has “mustered” up all the energy she can, and she appears anxious. She has read many books about coming to terms with grief and loss, yet she seems vested in pursuing more fertility treatments while engaging in the adoption process. Robert states, “I just want to get on with it. This uncertainty is worse than not being pregnant.” He is eager to begin the process and has a hard time telling you how he got to this emotional decision.

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Areas to Assess	Concerns	Possible Interventions

Vignette # 4 (page 7-72)

Samuel, Caucasian, age 50, has raised four sons “successfully” into adulthood. Samuel reports a high degree of parenting satisfaction. His sons were all athletic, good students, and worked to contribute towards their college educations. Samuel states, “I’ve got a lot of ‘dad’ left in me. Kids are kids, and I’m good at this.” Samuel has been divorced for eight years. He does not date but has many friends. Samuel’s home is full of photos of his children, but nothing current in his life that is separate and apart from his role as a father. He is attending an adoptive parent support group while he is exploring the idea of adoption. Samuel is often critical of the frustrations expressed by adoptive parents. He will often try to give advice to these parents based on his own experience.

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Areas to Assess	Concerns	Possible Interventions