



## Questions for Adoptive Parents to Ask When Interviewing a Prospective Mental Health Professional

- ❖ What are the mental health professional's credentials? Ask specifically about:
  - education and degree(s);
  - licensure or certification; and
  - training and experience.
- ❖ What is the mental health professional's training and experience with adoption in general? Ask specifically about:
  - Experience working with adopted children and adoptive family clients;
  - experience with open adoptions;
  - the role s/he thinks adoption plays in the individual and family behavior of triad members (birth parents, adoptive parents, and the adoptee); and
  - success stories with former adoptive family clients.
- ❖ Is the mental health professional's definition of adoption compatible with yours?
- ❖ Does the mental health professional have experience in treating children with a history (either known or suspected) of physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse or trauma? Ask specifically about:
  - grief and loss, attachment, identity issues, anxiety, and delayed development.
- ❖ If the mental health professional is not a medical doctor or nurse practitioner, does he or she have an affiliation with someone who can prescribe medication, if necessary?
- ❖ Does the mental health professional have a commitment to a particular "school" or method of treatment? What approach does the mental health professional use when working with children who experience symptoms of complex trauma or other conditions?
- ❖ How does the mental health professional involve parents in the treatment process?
- ❖ How does the mental health professional work with families when the adoption is transracial or transcultural?
- ❖ Is the mental health professional willing to work with other professionals involved with the family's adoption, such as social workers, teachers and other mental health professionals?
- ❖ Can the therapist estimate a timeframe for the course of therapy?
- ❖ What are the mental health professional's policies about reimbursement and scheduling?
  - Do they accept insurance or offer a sliding scale?

### References:

- Creech, M-C., "Finding the Best Therapy for Your Child," *Adoptive Parent Mentor Link Update*, (Spring 2000), Northwest Adoption Exchange: Seattle, WA, pp. 1-2.
- National Adoption Information Clearinghouse, "Tips on Selecting an Adoption Therapist," (date unknown), NAIC: Washington, DC, pp. 1-4.
- National Adoption Information Clearinghouse, "After Adoption: The Need for Services," (Revised May 1994), NAIC: Washington, DC, pp. 1-6.
- Simpson, N., "Unraveling the Therapy Maze," *Family Matters: Oregon's Special Needs Adoption Newsletter*, (July 1993), Special Needs Adoption Coalition: Portland, OR, pp. 1-2.
- Watson, Ken. "A Few Thoughts on Choosing an Effective Adoption Therapist," *Adoptalk*, (Summer 2002). North American Council on Adoptable Children, pp. 6-7.