



# Helping Adoptive Parents Navigate the Mental Health System

The attachment between a child and parent is the most significant relationship that child will ever have, and becomes the foundation for all other relationships built during a lifetime. Situations that cause significant separations from or loss of the parent result in psychological trauma for the child. Trauma effects can range from minor, short-term distress to major, long-lasting emotional difficulties resulting in unusual or unexpected responses to typical situations. Mental Health Services provide support and interventions designed to help adopted children and adoptive parents treat the consequences of early trauma that affect family relationships, peer relationships and individual functioning.

## TYPES OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The services and interventions recommended are based on information gathered about the needs of your child and your family, service availability and the desired outcome. Some of these services are:

- Clinical Assessment
- Individual therapy
- Family therapy
- Group therapy
- School-based services/special education
- Therapeutic day treatment
- Residential treatment
- Medication treatment
- Associated support services such as attendant care, case management, respite care and support groups.

These services can be provided in a mental health clinic, professional office, the family home, schools and other appropriate community settings. Some of these services are short-term, some are intermittent or only as needed, and others are long-term. Costs of mental health services may be covered by private insurance, Medicaid or sliding fees. It is important to discuss treatment options with your service provider.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK TO MATCH A THERAPIST TO YOUR FAMILY’S NEEDS

- What is your educational and training background?
- How are you currently licensed?
- What experience do you have with traumatized children or adopted children?
- What services does the therapist provide to meet the needs of my family?

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDER?

**An open line of communication** between the mental health provider and you is essential for effective treatment.

**Family-centered treatment** allows you and the mental health provider to work as partners in the treatment process.

**Positive feedback** encourages an honest, trustworthy environment for the evaluation of service effectiveness.

**Flexible and informative professionals** are able to meet your needs when and where you need them. They are also knowledgeable about helpful community resources.

For more online tip cards, visit [www.KCSL.org](http://www.KCSL.org) under the “Resources” tab.



Kansas Children's Service League

Parenting questions? Call the Parent Helpline: 1-800-CHILDREN or email/text 1800children@kcsl.org

