



## 5 Things Adoptive Families Need Their Therapists to Know

- 1) We need you to have specialized training to learn about issues distinct to adoptive family needs. There is no single adoptive family story. AND adoptive families need distinctive, informed support to thrive. Seek out specialized training and experts in the field.
- 2) It is very important that therapists are aware of the importance of sensitively handling issues related to an adoptee's first/birth family. In the old days, the thinking used to be that first/birth family contact was "confusing" for adoptees. As a general rule this is no longer best practices thinking, and therapists need to be prepared to navigate these complexities.
- 3) Adoptive parenting can be quite different from parenting biologically children who have been with their parents from birth. Many classic behavioral management strategies are not effective in adoptive families. In fact, many classic behavioral recommendations made by therapists can actually do harm in a family system.
- 4) We appreciate help coming up with practical strategies and scripts to deal with the countless intrusive questions we will face moving around in the world as adoptive families.
- 5) Adoptive parents are not "saviors" and adoptees are not "lucky." This is an oversimplified trope that hurts adoptive parents and adoptees alike. Follow adoptees on social media and listen to their voices. They are the experts in lived experience and can offer crucial feedback that will help adoption-informed therapists guide adoptive parents.