

A top-down view of a desk with various items: a bowl of snacks in the top left, a calculator with a white cross on its screen, a pair of black-rimmed glasses, a hand holding a pen over a notepad, and a smartphone. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter.

What's my *role*?: Exploring DHR *Adoptions*

Objectives:

- 1) Understand the scope of practice for each professional system who supports families who adopt through DHR in Alabama.
- 2) Identify the unique roles of each component of the adoption kinship network, focusing on gaps in service and areas of overlap.
- 3) Contribute to efforts to identify areas for policy and legislative change, and participate in advocacy efforts.



WHO IS IN THE ROOM?

let's get to know each other...



Adoption & Safe Families Act

Federal legislation, enacted in 1996, that all this policy and all these services is based on.



The whole point of collaboration is that
you give and take from each other, and
that's how you create things that are
totally new.

-Virgil Abloh

True OR False

- ▶ Adoption-only homes must meet all *Minimum Standards for Foster Family Homes*.
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True OR False

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True OR False

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True OR False

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- ▶ The county department where the child is originally from is responsible for providing monthly visits once an adoption placement is made.

True OR False: Tie Breakers

- ▷ What does ASFA stand for?
- ▷ When was it enacted?



A good collaboration pushes the
boundaries of both partners.

--Neil Blumenthal



OUR FRIENDS AT *DOH Office of Adoption*

- ▷ What they do:
 - ▶ A LOT!
 - ▶ CARE... big time!
 - ▶ Approve ANIR home studies
 - ▶ Consult with county offices on issues of adoption
 - ▶ Carry a "*bajillion*" children on their caseloads (~75+/each)
 - ▶ Travel around the country to place children
 - ▶ "Lead the team that makes the decision about a child's forever family..."



OUR FRIENDS AT *LDH Office of Adoption*

- ▷ What they do:
 - ▶ Are notified of *ALL* adoption proceedings, and respond to most
 - ▶ Release ANIR studies out-of-state
 - ▶ Share non-identifying background summaries (NIBS) with potential families
 - ▶ Write & update NIBS
 - ▶ Adoption Placements
 - ▶ Track & coordinate recruitment efforts of the partners and counties
 - ▶ Oversee the HGA, AFAPA, & APAC contracts/partnerships



▷ When to refer:

"After 1) the ISP team has reached a decision that permanent separation of the child from his family is in the child's best interests and that state placed adoption is the permanency goal; and 2) the petition to terminate parental rights has been filed and a hearing date set."

--Adoption Policies & Procedures



OUR FRIENDS AT *LDHC Office of Adoption*

- ▷ What they don't do:
 - ▶ "License" homes
 - ▶ Post-placement visits/supervision for each child



- ▷ Referral packets:
 - ▶ Child Specific Recruitment Registration
 - ▶ Let Me Tell You About This Child
 - ▶ In My Own Words
 - ▶ Photo Shoot Referral Form
 - ▶ Consent for Child Specific Recruitment
 - ▶ Child Characteristics-Daily Routine
 - ▶ Coversheet
- ▷ Also required: copy of complete case file



Let's hear from our friends at *Heart Gallery*





OUR FRIENDS AT *Alabama Pre/Post Adoption Connections (APAC)*

▶ What they do:

- ▶ Adoption preparation (therapists)
- ▶ Pre-service training for adoption-only families
- ▶ Home studies for adoption-only families
- ▶ Consultation/training for other parts of the system (like this *conference!*)
- ▶ Clinical side of adoption
- ▶ Support families through Adoption Placement Support
- ▶ Centralized Response & Follow up

▶ What they don't do:

- ▶ "License" or maintain homes
- ▶ Match children with families
- ▶ Photolisting

Pre-Service

TIPS or DT, plus a new *therapeutic* training including modules re:

- ▷ Attachment
- ▷ The Brain
- ▷ Behavior
- ▷ Preparing for Placment
- ▷ Self-Care

Home Study

Adoption home study; includes:

- ▷ @ least 2 home visits
- ▷ Deep dives into a family's trauma hx, marriage, FOOI, finances
- ▷ Often uses other forms of assessment such as therapy referrals, standardized assessments, etc.
- ▷ 300+ page file

Follow-up

Family Advocates provide

Adoption Placement Support

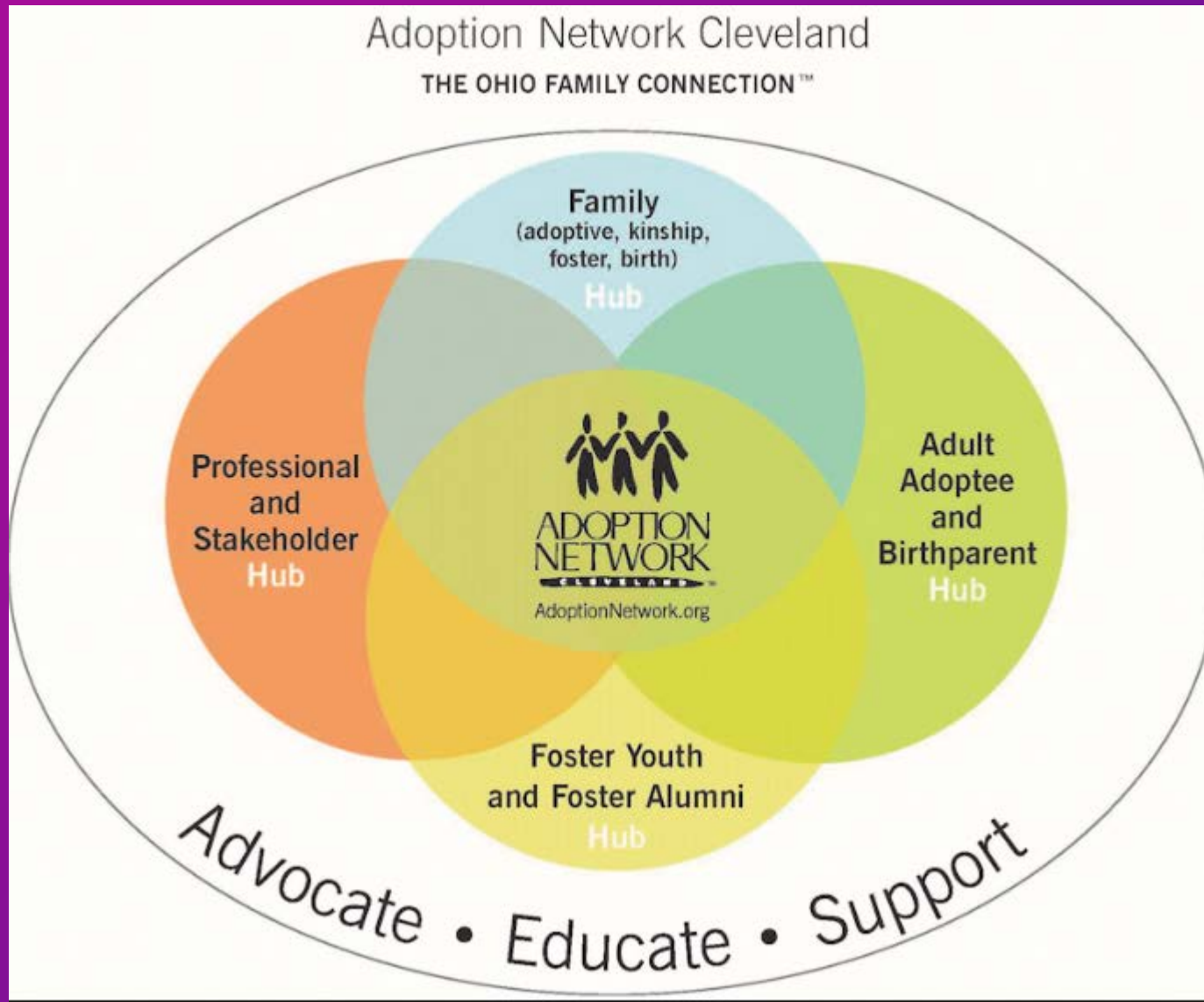
- ▷ In-home visits
- ▷ Advocacy
- ▷ Psychoeducation
- ▷ Referrals to ABA, psychiatry, adoption clinic, etc.
- ▷ Attend ISPs & IEPs
- ▷ Brings support systems together



Let's *compare* resource homes...

	<i>County Homes</i>	<i>APAC Homes</i>	<i>Other agency homes</i> <i>JFC</i>
Approved/licensed to...	Foster or adopt	Adopt-only	Foster-only * county or APAC (in most cases) must "upgrade" them to an adoption study
...these children:	A child in the county's custody *a child they've already fostered	Waiting Child	Any child meeting their contract criteria
Approved or Licensed	Licensed	Approved	Licensed
By whom?	County DHR	State DHR	Agency
Maintained by?	County resource unit/worker	County resource unit/worker	Agency
Must meet:	FC Minimum Standards	Adoption Minimum Standards	FC Minimum Standards







▷ Gaps

- ▶ Adoption Preparation
- ▶ Communication/coordination amongst partners
- ▶ Centralized recruitment
- ▶ Adoption exchange
- ▶ Legal assistance/issues
- ▶ General knowledge IN & OUT of the field
- ▶ Research/funding

▷ Overlaps

- ▶ County & State
- ▶ Contractors & DHR
- ▶ Multiple therapists for one family/child
- ▶ Legal issues- lack of partnership/coordination; Family & Probate



Collaboration is an important part of the process, and ego is never a part of it.

-Mack Wilberg



- ▷ Let's talk about *adoption prep* a little more.
 - ▶ Grief/loss, developmental grieving, identity issues, *gender/sexual orientation issues*, feelings of loyalty/disloyalty, belonging/not belonging, self-esteem, self-consciousness, fear, abandonment, withdrawal, acting out, confusion, betrayal, sadness, *religious considerations*, excitement, happiness, embarrassment, shyness, silliness, anger, boredom, hormones, diversity issues, trauma, PTSD... and on... and on...
 - ▶ HUGE *vulnerability*



- 3-5-7 Model
 - 3 tasks
 - 5 conceptual questions
 - 7 skills



- **Clarification:** Explores life events providing opportunities to reconcile losses;
- **Integration:** Focuses activities on rebuilding relationships through the attachment process;
- **Actualization:** Assists in visualizing future goals establishing permanent connections.



3-5-7: 5 Conceptual Questions

- ▷ Who am I? — identity formation
- ▷ What happened to me?—separation and loss; the grieving process
- ▷ Where am I going?– trust and safety in relationships; attachment cycle
- ▷ How will I get there? — recognizing those who will continue to provide support; relational permanency
- ▷ When will I know I belong? — feelings of safety, well-being and a readiness for future



3-5-7: 7 Skills

- Establishing the perception of **SAFETY** through authentic listening, physical location and continuity of time spent with child/youth/family
- Providing **OPPORTUNITIES** to **EXPLORE** feelings and understanding of life events
- **BEING PRESENT** to the exploration
- **LISTENING** to the stories
- **AFFIRMING** current perceptions
- **BRIEFLY SPEAKING** in response to questions, comments, and reactions of child/youth
- **RECOGNIZING** and **ACCEPTING** that current **BEHAVIORS** reflect **GRIEF RESPONSES**

710

Record number of foster care
adoptions in FY2018

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LET'S REVIEW SOME *concepts*



Adoption Kinship Network

Families are changing... we can change with them



Partners

Heart Gallery, CAS/APAC, and SDHR are here to HELP!



Collaboration

If we achieved 710 adoptions last FY, what can we achieve through even better collaboration?



3-5-7

There's an evidence-based way to help families and children get ready for adoption.



Overlaps & Gaps

The first step to changing is identifying *where* we need to change.



Ownership

This system belongs to all of us!



thanks!

ANY QUESTIONS?

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