

Access to Adoption Records for Adopted Adults

Tuesday 3rd November 2009
Thursday 25th February 2010
09.30 to 16.30

This course forms a stand alone programme or can be combined with either the Birth Records Counselling and/or Intermediary Work programmes to make a two day or completely comprehensive three day training programme.

The day will begin with exploration of what further information adopted adults who know their birth details may hope to find out. The roles of the agency doing the work and the appropriate adoption agency will be explored and clarified. It will cover the challenges of finding adoption record information and explore what actually is adoption record information. Varied examples will be used to help delegates create a reasonable narrative for an adopted adult where there is very little information available and to empower workers who are faced with multiple and complex care records when adoption records have been requested.

Principles involved in preparing personal narratives for adopted adults and the selection of key documents to include will be covered. This will also include negotiation with both Courts and the Appropriate Adoption Agency to agree release of original documents that will have emotional significance for the adopted person.

The sharing of the narrative and documents will be practised and reviewed.

The complex questions concerning third party information, data protection provisions and variations in agency policy will be explored.

Adoption - a matter of life and death

Wednesday 21st October 2009
Tuesday 9th February 2010
10.00 – 16.00

Since adoption began over 80 years ago it has been its permanence, for life, that has made it unique amongst the range of child care options. Adoption does not end when the adopted person becomes an adult but its end may be brought about by death. Sadly the extensive experience of AAA-NORCAP as a leading provider of intermediary services for over 25 years is that death may impinge upon adoption work far more frequently than would be expected.

This one day programme will begin with a presentation of the experiential findings of AAA-NORCAP and the interpretation placed upon them in conjunction with actuarial input.

The gender variation will be explored and the targeting of support and pre-emptive services considered.

In the afternoon delegates will engage in a range of exercises linked to sharing the news of a death within the adoption context with adopted adults, birth parents and other relatives and with adopted children through their adoptive parents. Consideration will be given to the need for ritual. Balancing the potentially conflicting needs of all parties will be explored.

Key issues that should influence preparation of prospective adopters will be identified and the implications for intermediary work of possibly discovering that the person sought has died.

Clearly this is not a cheerful day but one that will be led in a reflective and supportive manner that may be particularly helpful for workers who have felt isolated when confronted by death in adoption casework or who recognise they may well encounter it in their work.

Birth Records Counselling - the statutory process

Monday 2nd November 2009
Wednesday 24th February 2010
09.30 to 16.30

This one day course will begin with an overview of the history of adoption in England and Wales and in particular the changing face of adoption from the era when to be an unmarried mother was socially unacceptable and adoption the key route to acceptability for both mother and child to the current child focused adoption practice that frequently involves finding adoptive families for children who have spent part of their life in public care. The legislation and regulations will be explained. Role play will be used to enable delegates to identify with the experiences of, and work constructively with, service users who may:-

- only have learned of their adoption recently and as adults
- have been adopted transracially or transnationally
- have been 'privately' adopted
- learn they were adopted within their own family
- recall periods of abuse and neglect within their family of birth
- have suffered abuse within their adoptive family
- consider adoption the factor that has caused their life to be problematic

Key areas to be addressed include:-

- preparation for the statutory interview and the interview itself will be discussed.
- conducting a birth records counselling interview will be practiced
- additional services that can be offered to the applicant will be reviewed.
- the information the court is required to share will be explained and how to request discretionary information from courts will also be explored.
- guidelines for locating adoption record information will be provided so workers will be realistic in their predictions of obtaining further information for applicants.

This day can usefully be followed by the Access to Adoption Records for Adopted Adults training day

Intermediary Work

Wednesday 4th November 2009
Wednesday 9th December 2009
Wednesday 17th March 2010
09.30 to 16.30

This training day covers the provision of service to an adopted people or birth relatives who are the *applicant* from the point at which the location of the relative sought, *the subject*, has been found. It will briefly cover the essential statutory requirements including the determination that it is appropriate to proceed, but will primarily focus upon the professional skills necessary to be an effective intermediary.

Areas covered through presentation, role play, group work and discussion will include:-

- Description of the role of the intermediary and the core skills needed to fulfil the role effectively
- Preparation of the applicant
- Making approaches
- Receiving initial responses

- Support and counselling for the subject
- Helping the subject to reach an informed decision on how to respond to his/her relative's request
- Helping the applicant to understand the response of the subject
- Facilitating mutually desired contact
- Factors that cause additional complexity to casework
- Managing expectations, elation and despair
- Moving to closure

This skills development day will prove most useful for social workers who have already participated in the Birth Records Counselling and/or Access to Adoption Records and/or Revisiting the Past programmes

Revisiting the Past - Effective work with birth relatives who wish to use Intermediary Services

Tuesday 8th December 2009
Tuesday 16th March 2010
09.30 to 16.30

This programme begins by highlighting the statutory checks and processes necessary before intermediary work for birth relatives can be undertaken. Through presentation, role play, group work and discussion delegates will identify the needs and aspirations of birth relatives requesting intermediary service. The diverse range of situations that over the 80 year period of legal adoption in the UK have led to the adoption of children will be explored and the impact of these situations upon service users will be considered.

The AAA-NORCAP model of "Revisiting the Past" as an effective tool to enlighten assessment of the service user whilst meeting his/her underlying needs will be examined and practised. Principles involved in preparing personal narratives for birth parents and the selection of key documents to include will be covered. The roles of the agency doing the work and the appropriate adoption agency will be explored and clarified. The challenges of finding adoption record information will be explained. Varied examples will be used to help delegates create narratives in situations where there is very little information available and to empower workers who are faced with multiple and complex care records when the adoption records have actually been requested.

The day will conclude with an examination of the factors to be considered in reaching the agency decision of whether or not it is appropriate to proceed.

This course forms a stand alone programme or can be most usefully combined with the Intermediary Work programme above to make a two day programme for workers engaged in provision of intermediary services to birth relatives.

Safe Searching Skills

Thursday 15th October 2009
Tuesday 19th January 2010
Tuesday 23rd March 2010
10.00 – 16.00

This one day course begins with comprehensive input from experienced AAA-NORCAP Person Locators that details all the publicly available sources of records, how these may accessed, the costs involved and the information that can be

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gained. It includes two examples of searches, one that could be done by or for an adopted adult and the other is for when intermediary service is to be provided to a birth relative and the agency needs to locate the adopted person.

During the middle of the day delegates are able to work in small groups to try out the searching methodology and to use the AAA-NORCAP resources to complete a searching exercise or to undertake some searching relating to a piece of casework the delegate brings with her/him.

The final session is a review of the experience of trying to locate people and discussion of other options that may be explored if public records do not lead to location of the subject.

Venue AAA-NORCAP Training Room Wheatley, Oxon

If you would like to commission any of these courses for your agency or consortium at a venue you provide please contact:

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