

## PRE-FINALIZATION ADOPTION SERVICES

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### Intervention Services When a Family is in Crisis

- 1) Identify the presenting problem and its source.
  - Parents in crisis may be angry, emotional, and anxious. They may behave in ways that seem to be overly dramatic. They may threaten or blame others. Their behavior may be volatile and erratic.
  - The worker must assess the situation to determine the nature of the problem and how serious it is. The worker must fully explore the events that led up to the crisis, and identify “the trigger event.”
  
- 2) Develop a short-term plan with the family for immediate relief.
  - The family can be seen on an emergency basis by a mental health professional.
  - The child may spend a few days with relatives, former foster parents, or friends. Both the child and family need respite.
  - The child may be admitted for an inpatient evaluation if he is demonstrating severe behavioral or psychological problems.
  - Family members should agree that they will operate for the next several weeks on a day-to-day basis, and that they will not make any permanent or important decisions.
  
- 3) Help the family determine what they want.
  - Conduct the family assessment with an objective adoption professional or group of individuals who have been involved with the child and family, such as therapists, or other consultants.
  - Workers must avoid becoming caught up in the family's heightened anxiety and emotionalism. The worker must view the crisis as an expression of unmanageable stress and not project blame on the child, family, or the circumstances. The worker must also recognize her own attitude and realize that her response to the family in a calm, direct, matter-of-fact, confident manner could have a direct effect on the outcome.
  - Adoptive parents may not be thinking clearly and the parents may not be in agreement regarding the decision to disrupt. Assessors can help the family talk through the issue and their feelings to help determine their desired outcome.
  
- 4) Design an intervention plan.
  - The goal with all adoptive families in crisis is to strengthen, empower, and preserve the family. Once the origins of the problems have been identified, the family should choose only one to three issues/problems to address.
  - Objectives should be developed for each issue or problem. The objectives should be short-term, observable, and should not target only the child as the problem requiring intervention.