PREPARING ADOPTION PROFESSIONALS FOR PRACTICE WITH YOUNG ADULT ADOPTEES

BIBIANA KOH, AUGSBURG COLLEGE
RUTH MCROY, BOSTON COLLEGE
JAERAN KIM, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Who are we?
Young adults
Adoption curricula: Overview of current findings
Training certificate/programs
Federal and state funding to support curricula and training
Discussion
Arnett (2000) – argues for a distinct, newly emerging demographic
- 18 to 25 years
- Exploration of intimate relationships, career, and worldviews
Among approximately 24 million young adults over 18, **2.3%** (approximately 5.5 million) are young adult adoptees (2010 U.S. Census Bureau).

Half of the 2.3% are between the ages of **18 and 24 years** (Kreider and Lofquist, 2014).
Nearly two-thirds of Americans report having one of the following: (Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption with the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, 2002)

1. an adopted family member
2. a close friend with an adopted family member
3. relinquished a child for adoption
ISSUES IMPACTING YOUNG ADULT ADOPTEES

Consider the following:

- Age at adoption
- Experiences before adoption
  - Grief
  - Loss
  - Trauma
- Type of Adoption
  - Adoption from foster care
  - Transracial
  - Intercountry
  - Open/closed
  - Relative adoption/non-relative
  - Placement with siblings or without
- Experiences since adoption
Research question: Are we adequately preparing adoption professionals?

Purpose: To gain knowledge about adoption-specific curricula in undergraduate and graduate social service degree programs (e.g., Social Work, Family Studies, Psychology)

Design: Curricular review

Sample: Convenience sampling
Methods

• Purposeful, convenience sampling (for adoption course syllabi)
  • Listervs (Baccalaureate Program Directors, Master of Social Work, Title-IV-E)
  • NCFR Adoption Focus Group
  • Council of Social Work Education
  • Adoption researchers contacted directly (13)

Our request (via email):

■ “...adoption-specific courses that you have taught in your program. Adoption-specific content may include domestic and/or intercountry adoption, permanency planning, adoption research and/or or policy, and other topics related to the field of adoption.”
Total number of syllabi received = 16

- Schools represented (12)
  1. University of Massachusetts, Amherst
  2. St. Mary’s University
  3. University of Minnesota
  4. Western Texas A & M University
  5. Concordia University
  6. University of Georgia
  7. Campbellsville University
  8. Rhode Island College
  9. Iowa State University
 10. Macalester College
 11. Kent State University
 12. University of Washington
Results

- Total number of syllabi = 16
  - Disciplines represented (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>No# courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage &amp; Family Therapy (MFT)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ADOPTION CURRICULA: OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

## Results
- **Overview of courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th># Courses</th>
<th>Undergraduate vs Graduate</th>
<th># Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UG</td>
<td>UG/G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above provides an overview of courses in various disciplines, along with the number of undergraduate (UG), undergraduate/graduate (UG/G), and graduate (G) courses offered, along with the total number of credits for each discipline. The totals at the bottom of the table indicate the overall distribution of courses and credits across all disciplines.
### FINDINGS

How many courses focused exclusively on adoption?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adoption only focus (5)</th>
<th>Adoption/Foster Care (5)</th>
<th>Child Welfare (5)</th>
<th>Other (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Psychology of Adoption (2)</td>
<td>Adoption/FC Issues in Family Therapy</td>
<td>SW with Abusing/ Neglecting Families</td>
<td>Perspectives on Grief /Loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive Families in the 21st Century</td>
<td>Adoption &amp; Foster Families</td>
<td>Family/Child Welfare, FC, &amp; Adoption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>Foster Care/Adoption</td>
<td>Child Welfare Practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Adoption</td>
<td>Psychology of Foster Care/Adoption</td>
<td>Social Services to Children &amp; Families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Permanency in CW</td>
<td>Child &amp; Family Policy &amp; Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### FINDINGS

#### Disciplines of adoption-only courses (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Studies</th>
<th>Social Work</th>
<th>Psychology</th>
<th>Human Services</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Adoptive Families in the 21(^{st}) Century</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>Adoption</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding Adoption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
YOUNG ADULTS: CURRICULAR CONTENT

- No modules devoted to young adult content

- Option for focus on “adults” for assignments in three adoption-only content courses (391AD, MFT 660, and FSoS 4104)

- Readings that focus on young adulthood:
  

National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI)

- $9 million grant from US Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families (AFC)
  - Will develop web-based, evidence-based competency curricula for mental health and child welfare service providers working in adoption and permanency planning
  - Will build upon CASE’s TAC program (currently implemented in 13 states)
Assembly Bill 1790: Foster Children – Mental Health Services

- Legislation requires DSS to identify barriers to the provision of mental health services from mental health practitioners (who have received specialized training in adoption or permanency issues) to children receiving those medically necessary specialty mental health services.
## Adoption Certificate Programs: An Overview

- Total programs *currently* offered: 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>CEUs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) CASE Training on Adoption Competency (TAC)</td>
<td>12 states (13 sites)</td>
<td>Post-graduate</td>
<td>12 sessions (+12-18 hours)</td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Kinship Center ACT – An Adoption and Permanency Curriculum for Child Welfare &amp; Mental Health Professionals</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Post-graduate</td>
<td>8 days – 48 hours</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Advanced Practice Certificate Program in Adoption and Foster Care</td>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>Post-graduate</td>
<td>10 classes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Total programs *currently* offered: 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
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<th>Format</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>CEUs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(4) AFCC Adoption &amp; Foster Care Certificate Program</td>
<td>Rhode Island College</td>
<td>Open to all</td>
<td>3 core + 1 elective</td>
<td>?? $15 for certificate</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Adoption Certificate Program</td>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3 courses (2 req, 1 elective)</td>
<td>$362 + $15 for certificate</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Colorado Adoption Certificate Program</td>
<td>University of Denver</td>
<td>Post-graduate</td>
<td>6 days + 3 mos. Bi-weekly supervision</td>
<td>$1180</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training on Adoption Competency (TAC) – (2010 to present)

- 13 cites (NC, VA, MO, IA, CA, NE, MA, MI, OH, IN, CT, MN)
- Adoption-competent mental health (18 competencies)
- Intensive, competence-based training post-graduate certificate program for mental health professionals
- 12-13 modules (based on location) + 12-18 hours clinical consultation
  - One TAC module on adopted adolescents & identity that includes 1-hour emerging adulthood content
- University of Minnesota’s Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (CASCW)
  - BSW + 5 years experience
  - $1850 (scholarships & DHS funding available)
  - Completed by over 100 mental health professionals since 2012

- Post-graduate permanency “model curriculum for the industry” Completed by over 7,000 child welfare professionals
- 48-hour curriculum (8 days)
The Advanced Practice Certificate Program in Adoption and Foster Care

- Post-graduate or specifically outlined experience (min. 5 yrs.)
- NASW (Louisiana funded)
- 10 modules (90 CEUs)
- Last offered (2011-2012)
- Mental health providers who complete program are listed on Hunter College SSW Adoption Certificate Registry
Adoption and Foster Care Certificate (AFCC) Program

• Currently offered in 2015
• Competency-based vision and mission: “Adoption & foster care competent professional”
• Offered to all (even if not pursuing a certificate)
• Three required courses + one elective
• Certificate recipients
  • Entered in DCYF system
  • Attend peer consultation group with AFCC Program Coordinator
The Adoption Certificate Program
- 3 adoption courses total (2 required + one elective, 15 CEUs)
- Last offered 2013
- Certificate program objectives:
  - Theoretical foundation for treatment & support
  - Treat common clinical issues
  - Develop sensitivity toward these issues in clinical treatment
  - Preventative approach to relinquishment
The Colorado Adoption Certificate Program

- Collaborative partnership with UD, GSSW, Butler Institute for Families, the Adoption Exchange, and Colorado Department of Human Services
- Post-graduate program with developmental, theoretical, and clinical practice focus
- 45 CEUs
- $1180 tuition
OTHER POST-DEGREE PROGRAMS

- PACT – Pre/Post Adoption Counseling and Training
- Rutgers University – Adoption Certificate Program
- Washington State
- Portland State University – Therapy with Adoptive Families
- Hunter College – Certificate Program in Adoption Therapy
- University of Connecticut – Certificate Program in Adoption
- Case Western Reserve – Adoption Mental Health Service
- University of Toronto – Adoption Studies Certificate
- New Mexico – Certificate Program in Adoption/Foster Care Therapy
DISCUSSION

- Do you work with adopted adults?
- What education and training have you received to prepare you for this specialized work with emerging adopted adults?
- Has this education and training been adequate?
- What have been some of your biggest challenges in working with this population?
- What else do you need to be prepared for your work?
Thank you for attending!

Contacts:

Bibiana Koh, Ph.D., LICSW
koh@augsburg.edu

Ruth McRoy, Ph.D., LCSW
ruth.mcroy@bc.edu

JaeRan Kim, Ph.D., LCSW
jaeran@gmail.com