



# केंद्रीय दत्तक-ग्रहण संसाधन प्राधिकरण Central Adoption Resource Authority

महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार  
Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India



## ADOPTION COUNSELLING

[For members of the CWC/Counsellors engaged in  
DCPU/Professional Counsellors at district level]

Counselling in adoption contributes significantly in creating a positive bond between Adoptive Parents and Adopted Children. Counselling is an integral part of the process of Adoption.

Adoption involves a gamut of emotions ranging from intense hurt & grief to immense joy and fulfilment for both child and adoptive parents. In a sense, Adoption is the beginning of a lifelong relationship for adoptive parents and their child, at the same time, for the birth parents it is an ending of their parental ties with their biological child. Counselling in adoption leads to more successful and enriching parenting experiences.

Counselling is "an enabling process" that gives people the tools they need to take care of themselves, deal with issues, make better decisions, acquire coping mechanisms, and change their attitudes, beliefs, and actions by utilising their own inner resources. Discussions that are part of counselling typically have emotional undertones.

### Rule Position

Regulation 30(4) of the Adoption Regulations 2022 provides that the functions of the Specialised Adoption Agency in respect of counselling shall include the following, namely:- (a) counselling of biological parents in case of surrender; (b) pre-adoption counselling of prospective adoptive parents during the preparation of Home Study Report and matching process and linking them to the counselling centre at the Authority or State Adoption Resource Agency or District Child Protection Unit, wherever required; (c) counselling of older children before and during adoption; (d) counselling of adoptive parents whenever required; and (e) post-adoption counselling of the adoptees, when contacted by them in search of their roots.

Regulation 35(2)(n) of Adoption Regulations 2022 provides that the State Adoption Resource Agency shall put a system at place so that adequate number of social workers and or counsellors are available with District Child Protection Unit for :— (i) counselling and preparation of the Home Study Report of the prospective adoptive parents; (ii) preparation of the Child Study Report and counselling of older children, wherever required; (iii) preparing post-adoption follow-up report, wherever required; (iv) post adoption counselling to adopted children and adoptive parents; (v) assisting and counselling older adoptees in root search.



## Counselling in Adoption Process

Adoption system can be further strengthened through adoption counselling as mentioned below:

### Counselling biological mother/parents in case of surrender

The psycho-social status of biological parent/s or unwed mothers can't be comprehended when they have to surrender a child in an institution. While the child need not suffer any harm, the ramifications of relinquishment have a significant impact on the birth moms. After giving up their child, birth mothers lose all custody rights. Birth parent counselling provides birth parents with the chance to express their thoughts, discuss the reasons behind their decision to give up their child, and learn about all of their options, including keeping their child with them. Before a birth parent signs consent to adoption, the CWC must explain the effect of signing the consent, as well as the birth parent's right to independent legal advice. Regulation 7(11) of Adoption Regulations 2022 speaks about the counselling regarding surrendered child by different stakeholders.

### Pre-adoption counselling of PAPs

The pre-adoption preparation sessions may help adoptive families identify and formulate their questions and difficulties. Counselling of Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) in the pre-adoptive phase is required to (a) educate them on the nuances of adoption, (b) help them assess their capabilities and limitations as a parent, (c) point them to families, agencies, and professionals in adoption who can provide detailed inputs from their respective experiences, (d) make an informed decision in accepting a child they can support, and (e) assist them in registering for adoption for the appropriate category of children and provide therapeutic support to those needing to explain their hindrances, confusions, or misunderstandings.

Counsellor in the Pre-adoption phase may focus on the following issues:

- Review all documents at the time of the Home Study report to avoid any discrepancy in the adoption process;
- Review Adoption applications carefully before being submitted or approved on the CARA portal for HSR;
- Help PAPs coping with infertility or other medical issues;
- Resolve PAPs apprehensions about selecting a child on the basis of age, sex, color, social, medical issues and genetic background;
- Information about illegal or secret adoption.



## Post-Adoption Counselling

Post-Adoption Counselling is for anyone affected by adoption. This can be adopted persons, birth parents who have lost a child to adoption, adoptive parents, and adoptive families. This work includes working with issues of trans-racial adoption. Regulation 14(4) and 20(2 &3) of Adoption Regulations 2022 emphasize counselling in case of non- adjustment of both the child and the adoptive family with each other.

Post-adoption Counselling focuses on the following issues:

- coping with parenthood and change of roles;
- feelings of bonding and attachment;
- acceptance of the child by relatives & friends;
- sharing the fact of adoption with the child why, when, how; disciplining issues in Adoption;
- issues related to the child's schooling and academic performance; child needed to search for "Roots"- social, emotional, and legal issues; disruption in adoption placement;
- adoptive parenthood – change of roles;
- bonding and attachment with "others" – relatives, friends, neighbours;
- parenting concerns and disciplining issues;
- Besides, counsellors should make it a practice of encouraging adoptive parents to tell the children about their adoption at the appropriate time.

## Desirable skills of a Counsellor

In addition to the qualifications required for a Counsellor, he/she may have the following competencies:

- (a) Basic understanding of the potentialities of professional counselling;
- (b) A general understanding of different types of counselling particularly related to adoption;
- (c) 3-5 years working experience in counselling and therapy services;
- (d) Proficiency in English or Hindi or both;
- (e) Familiarity with adoption and child protection issues desirable favourably Adoption Regulations/ JJ Act;
- (f) Working experience in a multicultural environment or with the protection of children in need of care and protection is desirable;
- (g) Active listening, clarification, reflection, and effective questioning are some of the important skills required for a successful counsellor. Counsellors need to be empathetic, seeing things from the client's point of view, rather than sympathetic.

