



ADOPTION HOMESTUDY – NEW & IMPROVED INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

Are your reports all sounding the same? Ever wonder why you get the same answer from so many families?

How do you get a family to really think through the adoption decision, anticipate parenting and prepare for a lifetime of adoption experiences?

Learn how to ask questions to really assess if they understand adoption and parenting.

LEARNING POINTS:

- Acknowledge counter-transference and transference in the interviewing process.
- Gain awareness of your interviewing style.
- Enhance interview skills to elicit responses from prospective parents that demonstrate ability to handle adoption and parenting issues.
- Learn the difference in theoretical, leading and behavioral approaches to asking questions and obtaining information.

FOUNDATIONS

- Homestudies are state and federally mandated reports.
- Request for service comes from potential adoptive parent.
- Social worker as an independent contractor.
- Social worker as agent of an organization (agency).
- Social worker receives referral from attorney or other resource.
- While many social workers use “templates”, each report should reflect that particular family. Not a generic sounding report.

HOMESTUDY IS: An interview to gain needed information:

- A chance to answer questions.
- A time to educate.
- A time for dialogue.
- A time for support.

BEFORE YOU WORK WITH A CLIENT

Acknowledge counter-transference and transference in the interviewing process.

How does your life intersect with adoption?
How do you feel about working in the adoption field?
Has that changed over time?
What do you tell clients about yourself? Why?
How do you feel about being in a position to approve or not approve an adoptive parent.
How does it feel to work for an agency or receive a referral from attorney vs a client contacting you directly?

Gain awareness of your personal interviewing style.

Are you in listening mode?
Do you feel hurried?
What do you do if the person being interviewed is unresponsive? Distracted?
What do you do if a couple seem to disagree on the adoption plans?
What has been your best interview? How can you replicate it?

Enhance interview skills to elicit responses from prospective parents that demonstrate ability to handle adoption and parenting issues.

Have you clearly told client what happens when? Pre and post home visits?
How did you do this (phone, email, written materials)?
How did you handle questions or anxieties?
How have you prepared to handle disagreements about information in the HS clients, attorneys or agencies, etc.

THREE TYPES OF QUESTIONS – resulting in 3 types of answers.

THEORETICAL QUESTIONS suggest something that could happen, but is not now happening or something that you think is true but you cannot prove.

- If a tree falls in the forest and there is no one there to hear it, does it make a noise?
- Where do you think the UFOs are coming from?
- Open adoption works best. How will you relate to your child's birth parents?
- Children adopted from overseas need to be proficient in two languages and cultures.
- What will you do to ensure this?

LEADING QUESTIONS ask questions that are deliberately designed to influence another person or make them think in a certain way. They may include the answer, point the listener in the right direction or include some incentive to state the 'right' answer. They may include the use of voice tone, emphasis or body language

- Clowns are so scary. Are you taking your toddler to the circus?
- After working so hard on your career, staying at home will be hard for you.
- Since you can't physically discipline your child, what will you do?

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS help discovery how someone acted or reacted in a specific situation. Reasoning: past behavior/reactions will predict future behavior/reactions.

In a traditional interview, you will be asked questions with clear answers:

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Describe a typical work week.

In a behavioral interview, the questions illicit if a person has the skill set needed to complete the task:

Instead of asking what you would do - they ask what you did.

- How did you handle the last disagreement with your spouse/parent?
- Who is the last person that disappointed you? How did you handle it?
- As a parent, when is the last time you disciplined your child? What did you do?

TELL ME ABOUT A TIME WHEN.....

You had to adjust to another person's style of doing something. (**Adaptability**)

You had to sort through information and make a decision. How did you do this? What was the outcome? Would you make the same decision now? Why or why not?
(Analytical Reasoning/Problem Solving)

You knew someone was lying to you.

You made an unpopular decision and how you handled other people's reactions.

You motivated others. (**Communication/Interpersonal Skills/Leadership/Teamwork**)

You did something in an unexpected or unusual way. What did you do? What was the outcome? How did other's react? (**Creativity/Initiative**)

You made a difficult decision without knowing all the facts.

You made a quick decision.

You made an unpopular decision.

(Decision-Making/Judgment/Interpersonal Skills)

You set a goal, how you achieved that goal, how you handled bumps in the road.

You set a goal but were unable to reach it. How did you handle that? (**Goal Setting**)

You had to do something because of rules, but you did not agree with them.

You had to put your needs aside and help someone else.

You had to adapt to a wide variety of people, situations or environments.

(Flexibility/Adaptability/Teamwork)

You had to multitask. What was the outcome?

You had to reschedule or miss a workday because something unexpected happened.

(Planning/Organization/Time Management)

You disappointed yourself.

You disappointed a spouse/friend/child. (**Strengths/Weaknesses/Self-Awareness**)

SAMPLE FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

What did you do? (Not, why did you do that?)

How did they react? (Not, were they ____?)

What was your reaction? (Not, were you _____?)

How did you feel? (Not, were you ____?)

What would you do next time? (Not, what would you do differently)

Tell me more about..... (Not, that sounds _____, what did you do next?)