



**Achieving More Together / Cyflawni Mwy  
Gyda'n Gilydd**



# THE NAS POST ADOPTION TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- These materials have been developed for the National Adoption Service for adoptive families
- Their purpose is to provide a learning and development resource for adopters post placement
- These tools can be used by groups or by individuals.
- There is lots of information in the notes below each slide so it is important to read these too as they provide much more information, and some useful ideas for more reading.



# Transitions



# LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module participants will have:

- Considered the particular needs of children who have experienced uncertainty when involved in transitions
- Reflected on their own experience of transitions
- Consider their role in being the secure base for a child and supporting them with regulating their emotions
- Shared some tips for helping child with transitions



# TRANSITIONS

- Many adopted children find transitions and change difficult.
- Children who have suffered trauma at an early age are more sensitive to threat/danger.
- The feeling of uncertainty can trigger their stress response. They will not be able to think rationally about the situation if they have not yet been able to learn to regulate this stress feeling.
- They will need to learn to trust in their relationship with their parent and it is in this relationship that they can learn to self regulate and then cope better with the changes.



# TRANSITIONS

- ‘The process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another’
- Support with minor transitions throughout childhood can help equip a child and build resilience for managing major transitions in the longer term



# LIFE TRANSITIONS



# WHAT ADOPTERS SAY

Some transitions  
can be positive,  
bringing new things  
and perspectives.

They are  
necessary, an  
inevitable part of  
life. We need to  
live through  
them to prepare  
for adult life





# WHAT ADOPTERS SAY

If you can stage transitions, this can sometimes help – having a foot in both camps - the old and the new. .

Our experience is that it can re trigger the loss.

The lack of control, and the uncertainty are hard for children to manage



# WHAT ADOPTERS SAY

Leaving behind can  
mean gaining  
something more  
with the new

It may not be as  
bad as you think.

When you  
move on to  
secondary  
school you will  
make new  
friends



# TRANSITIONS

- All transitions can be stressful even minor ones for an adopted child.
- Transitions involve letting something go in order to move on to the next.
- This requires the ability to regulate stress: without this they can be traumatic.
- Various factors influence how the child may react: temperament, age, relationships..



# ACTIVITY

Think of a time when you went through a major transition:

- How did you feel?
- What age were you?
- What helped you to cope and move on?
- What didn't help?

Now think about what might be the same and different for your child(ren)?



# KNOW YOUR CHILD'S HISTORY

- The child's early experiences will affect how they manage the stress of transitions
- It is useful to reflect on their Attachment style so you can identify how they are managing their stress
- The child will need you to help them to learn how to self regulate



# COMPASSION

- Help your child to talk about their experiences and show that you understand
- Focus on your relationship with the child so you and they are confident in you being their secure base
- When responding to behaviours try to identify the need behind it and respond to this, even when it is not what you feel is expected



# FEELINGS...

*‘There should never be a hidden agenda to ‘change’ the child’s feelings. A child feels what he/she feels. We may not like the child’s behaviours, or we may not completely understand the reaction, but it should always be okay to be mad, sad, or excited.’*

(Blaustein and Kinniburgh 2010)



# FEELINGS...

- Loss: in order for a child to move forward they must let go of what went before
- This can be a shift from one place to another or from one emotional/physiological state to another
- ‘Like reinforcing a vulnerable building, you can put in extra support’





# SCHOOL

“School can be a real factor for building resilience. It can also be a real negative”

“It’s also to do with the individuals, sometimes children just need someone to key into”

“ it sometimes feels that the school’s inability to respond is linked to a lack of resources, people are too busy, not enough time to focus on the individual child’



# CHILD'S REACTION TO UNCERTAINTY

- Feel out of control
- Overwhelmed by uncertainty
- Overwhelmed by issues of loss

## Resulting behaviours:

- Lose concentration
- Wander around/avoidant
- Become disruptive/aggressive/confrontational
- Become anxious
- Complain of sickness, headaches



# MOVING SCHOOL

- Fear of the unknown
- Make it familiar
- Map the school site and schedule
- Identifiable places and people



# PERIODS OF SENSITIVITY

- Home to school
- Movement within school – change classroom, dinner time etc
- Completing and ending tasks
- Waiting
- Staff changes
- End of term,
- *“Half term from hell – Halloween, followed by a month of preparation for Christmas”*



# SOME IDEAS...

- Key Adult
- Home to school notebook
- Transitional object – so child has a sense of you when you are not with them
- Timers – to help child who may lack a sense of time



# SOME MORE IDEAS...

- Visual aids/Memory cards – to help them cope with waiting and reassurance that it will happen
- Preparation for next step – respect child's need for Goodbyes and prepare for new
- Avoid abrupt endings
- Value relationships already have



# RESILIENCE

- Change is inevitable in life so building resilience is a useful approach
- Resilience is the 'rubber ball' factor i.e. being able to bounce back!
- By focussing on some key factors in resilience it can help provide a focus for us



# KEY AREAS

- Secure Base
- Education
- Friendships
- Talents and Interests
- Positive values
- Social competencies





# KEY MESSAGE

*‘It is within the context of warm interested, reciprocal relationships that children learn to feel secure, loved, valued, recognised, appreciated, applauded and celebrated.’*



# RESILIENCE

*“ Sometimes this is really difficult when you are living with children who have catastrophic thinking” “ sometimes as a Dad, trying to find something positive to say is really difficult, even though I know it’s good for him. I can laugh about it sitting here, but sometimes I bore myself at home, always having to deal with negative behaviour”*

*“You need to build resilience in yourself as well”*



# WHAT SOME ADOPTERS SAY...

- To summarise: Your child's ability to manage transitions will stem from their early experiences and their ability to regulate their emotions.
- So now think about what you have learnt and reflect on those transitions that you identified earlier on.
- See if you can apply some of the ideas from this course.



- This course is part of a series developed by the National Adoption Service to support adopters after approval.
- These can be accessed at the National Adoption Service website.
- Please talk to your adoption support team for further information

