

The Donaldson Adoption Institute's paper, [A Need to Know: Enhancing Adoption Competence among Mental Health Professionals](#), draws invaluable attention to the need for an adoption competent clinical workforce to serve families and individuals touched by adoption. Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska (LFS) has long been committed to building our community's capacity to provide adoption competent clinical services to members of the adoption kinship network in Nebraska. Lutheran Family Services has partnered with the [Center for Adoption Support and Education \(C.A.S.E.\)](#) which has been at the forefront in developing the foundation and mechanisms that are crucial to building and sustaining community capacity to deliver adoption competent mental health services: the first-time development of consensus-based adoption competencies for mental health professionals; the development of a standardized, manualized training for adoption competency specifically designed for mental health professionals; and the implementation of an evaluation process that assesses training delivery, effectiveness and outcomes.

[C.A.S.E.'s TAC \(Training for Adoption Competence\)](#) is a post-graduate training program -- a mechanism highly recommended by the Donaldson Institute -- that specifically addresses the specialized assessment and intervention skills outlined in the Donaldson Institute paper. It meets these goals through classroom-based knowledge building and skill enhancement and through a 6-month case consultation process that supports the active transfer of knowledge to practice. The TAC is highly intensive -- 78 hours of classroom-based training and 6 months of clinical case consultation -- and it provides in-depth attention to all of the key areas of training identified in the Donaldson Institute paper.

C.A.S.E. and Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska stand behind each of the [Donaldson Institute](#) recommendations, viewing each of them as critical to enhancing adoption competence among mental health professionals. Fortunately, C.A.S.E. and LFS are already leading the way on several recommendations.

Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska charged Right Turn® -- Nebraska's post-adoption and guardianship support program, with delivering TAC to Nebraska clinicians. Right Turn®, a collaboration between Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska and Nebraska Children's Home Society, will complete the first TAC course held in Omaha, Nebraska this November. Students will go on to participate in six months of case consultation with a trained clinician from C.A.S.E. As this class nears an end, Right Turn® is preparing to begin a second class of students in Grand Island, Nebraska. Right Turn® is eager to share TAC across the state in an effort to improve accessibility to adoption-competent mental health services for Nebraska's adoption community - one class at a time. Quality post-adoption and guardianship services are essential for long-term family success. Right Turn® offers training for families and professionals along with other support services which include: case management services, respite care connections, networking opportunities with other adoptive and guardianship families, and connections to adoption competent services in the community.

C.A.S.E. fully embraces the Donaldson Institute's recommendation on research on training effectiveness and outcomes. Through its collaboration with PolicyWorks, C.A.S.E. has implemented rigorous evaluations of its TAC program through assessments of training delivery, effectiveness and outcomes, from the outset -- beginning with the TAC pilot test in 2008 and continuing through to the present implementation of the TAC in sites across the country. Systematic research is already documenting the knowledge gained by TAC participants and changes in clinicians' practices, and research is being planned to assess the more complex area of outcome changes for clients in terms of satisfaction with services and reduction in presenting problems.

ADOPTION COMPETENCE MEDIA RELEASE – 9/13/2013

C.A.S.E. and Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska stand ready to work collaboratively with the Donaldson Institute and other organizations to bring all of the paper's excellent recommendations to reality.

[Click here to read the executive summary of "A Need to Know."](#)

For more information or to bring the [TAC program](#) to your community, contact C.A.S.E. CEO, Debbie Riley at riley@adoptionssupport.org or 301-476-8525.