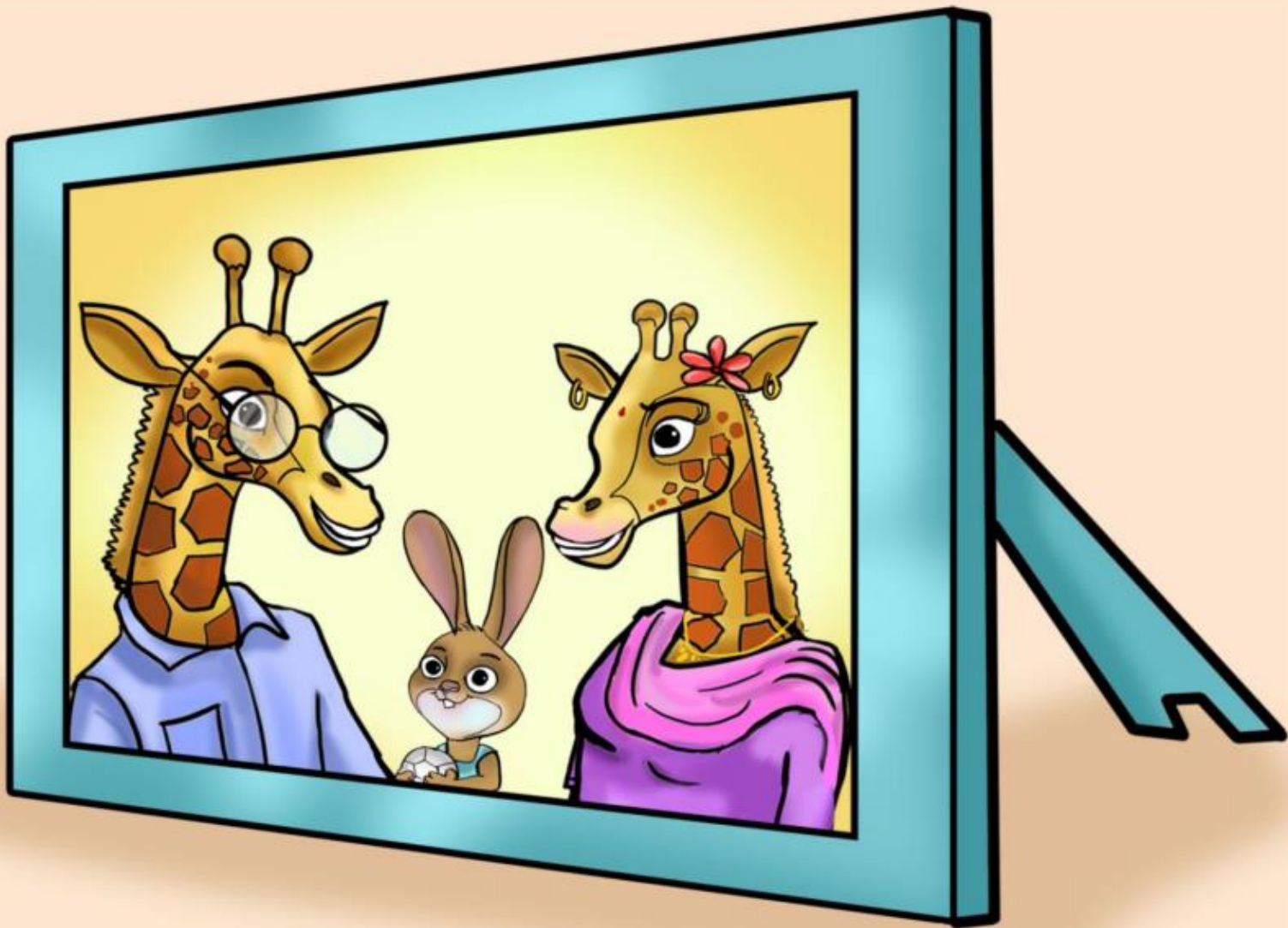




Adoption Counselling: Working with Young Children & Prospective Adoptive Parents

**A Training & Capacity Building Program for Adoption
Counsellors & Functionaries**



SAMVAD

**Support, Advocacy & Mental health interventions for children in Vulnerable
circumstances And Distress**

**A National Initiative & Integrated Resource for Child Protection, Mental Health, &
Psychosocial Care of the Ministry of Women & Child Development,
Government of India**

**Located in the Dept. of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,
National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore**

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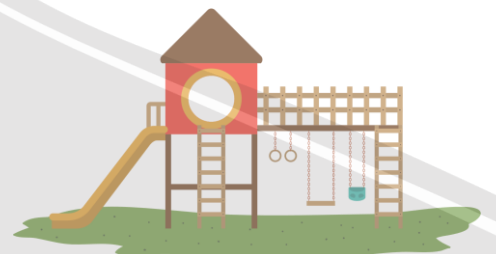
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ABOUT SAMVAD

SAMVAD (Support, Advocacy & Mental health interventions for children in Vulnerable circumstances And Distress) is a National Initiative & Integrated Resource for Child Protection, Mental Health and Psychosocial Care established by the Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India. This initiative is located in the Dept. of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, NIMHANS. With the aim of enhancing child and adolescent psychosocial well-being, through promotion of transdisciplinary and integrated approaches to mental health and protection, SAMVAD was established to extend its support and activities to all the states in the country. It comprises of a multidisciplinary team of child care professionals, with expertise in training and capacity building, program and policy research pertaining to child mental health, protection, education and law.

SAMVAD has been mandated by the Mission Vatsalya Guidelines of the Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India ***“to develop and increase counselling capacity as well as resource persons at the State/UT level, including Psychiatric counselling and mental health wellbeing of children in coordination with Support, Advocacy & Mental Health Interventions for Children in Vulnerable Circumstances And Distress (SAMVAD)- National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS).”***



SAMVAD's Objectives

Develop

Standardized child-centric modules and resources for the capacity building of primary, secondary and tertiary level psychosocial and mental health care service providers.

Strengthen

Knowledge and skills in child and adolescent protection and psychosocial care in various cadres of child care service providers in the country, through training and capacity building initiatives at primary, secondary and tertiary care levels of child protection and mental health.

Enhance

Child and adolescent protection and psychosocial care programs implemented by government and non-government agencies, by providing technical support on program design and quality.

Undertake

Studies, audits, research and advocacy on issues pertaining to child and adolescent protection and related issues of mental health and psychosocial care.

Utilize

The experiences of capacity building, technical programmatic support and research in informing child and adolescent laws and policies in the country.



The SAMVAD Model

CHILD CARE & PROTECTION



Integration of CAMH into country's child protection systems through training & capacity building of child protection functionalities.

Equipping child protection system with skills to identify, refer and provide first level response to mental health risks & concerns in vulnerable children.

***Stakeholders:** community-level care providers, child care institution staff, District Child Protection Office personnel, members of Child Welfare Committees & Juvenile Justice Boards.



POLICY & LAW

Integration of CAMH issues into judicial systems, through judicial education, deliberations.

Critical reviews of child policies and legislations to reflect children's developmental and mental health concerns.

***Stakeholders:** Juvenile Justice Committees of Supreme Court of India & State High Courts; National & State Judicial Academies, Judicial Officers



MENTAL HEALTH

Integration of CAMH awareness at primary and community level.

Training & Capacity Building of secondary & tertiary level mental health service providers.

Linking mental health services to child protection systems.

***Stakeholders:** (Pre)school teachers, community health workers, District Mental Health Program (DMHP) functionalities, tertiary mental health care service providers

SAMVAD

Develop standardized CAMH-protection methods and protocols for direct intervention and capacity building.

Strengthen CAMH and protection knowledge and skills in child care service providers.

Undertake Research, technical support in CAMH & protection.

Develop scalable CAMH-Protection models

EDUCATION



Integration of CAMH issues into education spaces by enhancing the capacities of educators, teachers, school counselors to identify and respond to emotional, behavior and learning problems in school children.

Promotion of first level mental health supports, including interventions for early stimulation, development and life skills education for preventive-promotive purposes.

1. Background and Rationale

During social reform in the 1950s, India intensified its interventions for assisting abandoned, destitute and surrendered children. These children were institutionalized and eventually placed in domestic and inter-country adoption. Adoption as a construction of a family has gained momentum in India since the 1980s. However, since then, and particularly in recent years, the field of adoption has undergone many legal and policy level changes, such as the institution of the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) as a statutory body of Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), Government of India. It functions as a nodal body of adoption of Indian children, and it is mandated to regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions.

The rules and procedures governing child adoption are detailed-out in the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015, and in the 2017 Adoption Regulations, there are few resources that provide support and assistance to prospective adoptive parents (PAPs) on various psychosocial care and mental health aspects of adoption, including a variety of pre-adoption and post-adoption concerns. Such concerns may range from a couple's readiness for adoption, to making decisions about accepting a 'referral' when a child becomes available to them. Also, understanding the developmental status and needs of the child, issues around adopting an older child, addressing issues of attachment and bonding with an adopted child, queries about emotional and behavioural issues and adoption disclosure, to name a few. Thus, given the psychosocial support needs of PAPs, the child care and protection system that works on adoption issues through CARA and equivalent state adoption systems need to be equipped with the skills and capacities to help adoptive parents navigate through these complex decisions and issues.

1.1. Challenges in Adoption

Between April 2018 and March 2019, there were only 4,027 in-country and inter-country adoptions (CARA, 2019), which are woefully low for a populous country such as India. The relatively conservative family culture in India does not support adoption, let alone promote it as an ideal or even an equal option to a biological child. Interestingly, Indian folklore and mythology is filled with stories of adoption, planned or accidental, including successful stories of single parent adoptions. While the stories vacillate between adoption due to childlessness and in order to ensure the child's welfare, they somehow maintained the primacy of the child. But as time went by, the notion that adoption is only for couples who cannot conceive a child, became the norm. There are those who adopt children out of choice (and despite having biological children), because they believe in the philosophy of adoption, in that of children needing a family; however, these numbers are few as compared to those who feel compelled to adopt due to the inability to bear children. The stigma associated with infertility, and the socio-cultural concepts of the conjugal bond that entail the task of producing children, make adoption appear as a problematic alternative for childless couples who prefer to seek assisted conception. Adoption, therefore, continues to remain a less desirable option because 'the links between an adopted child and the social parent become a public, vocal, and visible admission of infertility'.

Consequently, today, adoption in India is largely restricted to some pockets of the urban upper middle class, whose families tend to be more enlightened and therefore open to the idea of adopting a child; there are peri-urban and rural families also coming forward to adopt children, but their reasons have more often than not tended to stem from the desperation to have a child, either due to the social stigma of childlessness or the need for economic support and care during illness and old age.

Finally, interestingly, and unfortunately, while the adoption (and foster care) promotion agenda in India should ideally further the deinstitutionalization objective, it may also do so in a negative manner: while adoption started out with the objective of providing childless parents with children and homeless/vulnerable children with families, in the wake of deinstitutionalization, it is also being used as a tool to ‘push’ children out of institutions.

In 2016, CARA launched a new category of ‘children for immediate placement’. These children did not fall into the ‘special needs’ category, but were ‘hard to place’ either due to some ‘minor deformity’ or because of them being older in age. Unfortunately, while the intent of the new category may have been to reduce the otherwise long and bureaucratic processes of adoption, what also seems to have happened is that the already inadequate adoption counselling processes implemented by child care institution staff and counsellors became even more limited and fragmented; thus, placing children at serious risks of care and protection.

The consequences of the new ‘immediate placement’ category, and the poor pre-adoption counselling in particular, are also evident in what is being reported as a crisis for India’s Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)—that of adoptive parents returning children soon after adoption. Between 2017 and 2019, of the 6,650 children adopted by Indian families, 278 of them (4%) were returned. It was reported that most of the children who were returned were those with special needs, and that families were unable to take care of them; it was also reported that many of the returnee children were those above the age of 6 years.

Such issues reflect serious gaps in the adoption counselling processes, wherein children are not properly assessed in order to inform adoptive parents of their needs and realities; adoptive parents are not adequately prepared for parenting in the context of adoption, and labour under many unrealistic expectations of the experience of adoption.

Indeed, our extensive field experience through our community-based initiatives for child protection and mental health, have found poorly implemented pre-adoption counselling processes and inadequate preparation of PAPs and children. Amongst others, these include unsystematic home studies that yield inaccurate information on the abilities of a family to parent or adopt, incorrect developmental assessments of children, poor information to families on children's developmental status and abilities, lack of due process and counseling for the smooth transition of the child from an institution to a family, and inadequate preparation of parents on adoption disclosure issues. Such gaps in systemic processes have (had) serious consequences for the success of the adoption, particularly the well-being of the child.

1.2. The Need to Strengthen Adoption Counselling Processes

Adoption and foster care call for an emotional commitment and readiness to nurture a child that is not biologically one's own. In the light of the above challenges, it is imperative that psychosocial care, protection and mental health components are integrated with the existing legal and procedural aspects of the Indian adoption processes. This will ensure that timely and appropriate assistance and support is available to (prospective) adoptive parents at key decision-making stages in the adoption process and after.

Consequently, it will ensure the safety and best interests of the (adopted) child. Indeed, the objective of adoption is to find or ensure ‘the right’ family for a child—not the other way around, as it is often assumed, when CARA ‘matching’ processes are used by child protection systems to try to ‘find a child for prospective adoptive parents’. Given that our main focus is on the child and on ensuring that the child finds a good family, it is necessary for child care and protection workers/adoption counsellors to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to assist both PAPs and children through the requisite processes, from legal and psychosocial perspectives.

Furthermore, in light of the Juvenile Justice (Amendment) Act of 2021, new adoption guidelines developed by CARA/ MoWCD in 2022, the District Magistrates are tasked with facilitating time-bound adoption-related decisions. In view of the same, pre and post adoption counselling are critical in ensuring that children’s right to a family environment is not undermined by gaps in implementation i.e., adoption orders are robust, and prevent the possibility of child returns.



2. Training Objectives

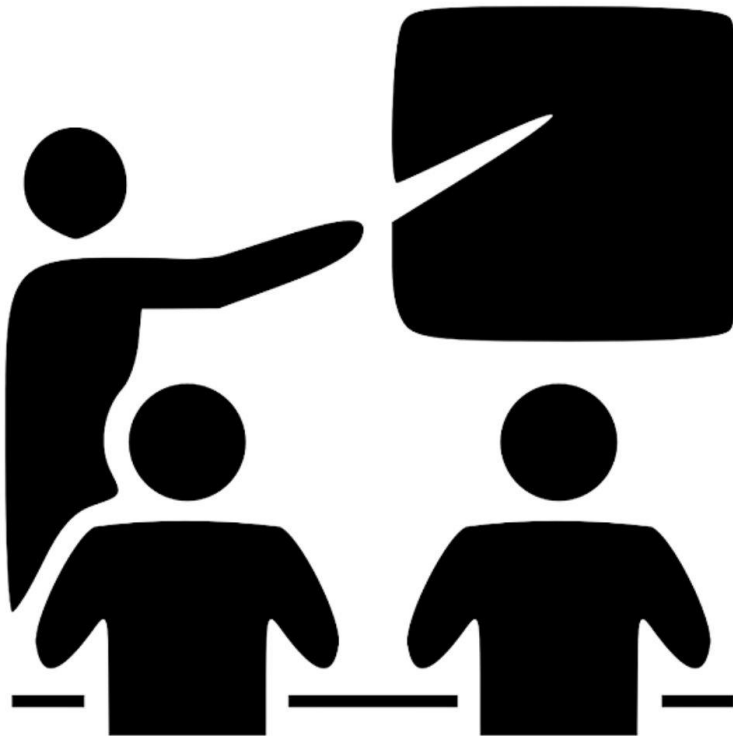
The objectives of the proposed training and capacity building initiative are for participants to develop knowledge and skills in the following areas of adoption counselling:

- Understanding the laws and rules that govern Indian adoption processes.
- Conducting systematic home studies to assess the capacity of prospective adoptive parents for adoption and parenting.
- Implementing developmental assessments for young children for use in CARA categorization processes as well as pre-adoption counselling with prospective adoptive parents.
- Preparing children for adoption by developing methods and skills to communicate with young children on issues of trauma and adoption.
- Implementing pre-adoption counselling for prospective adoptive parents to include:
 - An understanding of children's developmental status and the interventions that children may require post-adoption.
 - An understanding of how to enable children to adjust to their new home and family, in the immediate aftermath of adoption.
 - Development of parental attachment and bonding with adopted children.
 - Preparation for disclosure of adoption to children in the future.
- Addressing the emotional and behavioural issues of children who may be 'returned' i.e., when adoption is not successful.
- How to proceed with adoption of older children i.e., who are aged 10 and above.

3. For Whom

This training and capacity building program is for child care and protection counsellors and social workers working in/ associated with child care institutions that house children of ages 0 to 6 years, and/or that are designated as registered adoption agencies by the State/Central government.

A modified version of this training would also be applicable to the Members of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and others associated with State Adoption Resource Agency(SARA)/Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) at policy and decision-making levels.



4. Training Curriculum & Content

The Ministry of Women & Child Development established SAMVAD with a view to ensure creation and delivery of standardised, technically accurate content on issues of child protection, mental health and psychosocial care. The training curriculum and content (detailed below) has been developed based on the NIMHANS Dept. of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's long experience with child protection and mental health in multiple settings and contexts, including training of child protection and other related functionaries, over the years. Therefore, programmatic content cannot be abbreviated or altered in ways that dilute the program or the purpose of the training program. SAMVAD reserves the right to adapt the program as necessary, solely in accordance with the aim of ensuring teaching-learning quality—in order that vulnerable children ultimately benefit from the service providers.

Phase 1: Early Childhood Development & Care for Children in Difficult Circumstances

The first phase will focus on enabling caregivers in child care institutions with skills to work with infants and young children, as it is essential to first have a strong foundation in early childhood care and development, upon which adoption issues are predicated.

4.1 Early Child Development: From Theory to Practice

Objectives:

- Understanding children's developmental milestones in order to understand their developmental needs.
- Identifying development of abilities and skills and requisite interventions for the same, in accordance with age.

Content:

This session will enable service providers to gain knowledge and skills regarding the key domains of domains of child development i.e., physical, speech & language, cognitive, social and emotional development. Focusing on ages 0 to 6 years, it will help them understand normative developmental milestones along with the types of interventions that a child care institution (CCI) for young children should facilitate in order for children to develop skills. The implications for adoption will also be discussed, particularly in terms of ensuring early stimulation and development of young children, for optimum growth and development, even whilst they are still in institutional care.

4.2 Developmental Problems & Disabilities in Young Children

Objectives:

- Orientation to developmental delays and disabilities in young children.
- Identifying the nature and types of developmental problems.
- Addressing children's developmental needs and deficits through provision of 'home-based' care and inputs, and relevant referrals to specialized services.

Content:

Further to the previous session, these sessions will orient service providers to developmental delays and disabilities in young children. Broadly, such developmental disabilities pertain to: (i) physical and loco-motor disabilities; (ii) sensory disabilities; (iii) intellectual disabilities.

With the objective of early screening and identification, the sessions will focus on enabling caregivers to systematically screen and identify children with developmental problems, and to provide 'home-based' interventions and inputs as well as referrals for specialized services. These issues will be linked to their implications for adoption i.e. categorization of the child in the special needs category, and preparation of/ psychoeducation to PAPs at the time of adoption.

4.3 Developmental Assessment of Children

Objectives:

- To learn about methods of developmental assessments for young children.
- To use systematic assessment protocols to conduct assessments.
- To use the assessments to identify developmental delays and deficits in order for the requisite interventions to be planned.

Content:

This session aims to equip participants with knowledge of screening check-lists and systematic protocols for assessing children between ages 0 and 6 years. This will also include introducing caregivers to the use of socio-emotional assessments (such as the strengths and difficulties questionnaire), in order to help them identify gaps and deficits in these domains. Given that children coming to child care institutions often do not have parents/ caregivers to provide developmental histories, the protocols are geared to elicit information through observation and interaction of children. Consequently, it exposes participants to the use of various methods and materials that would enable them to identify developmental abilities and deficits of each individual child, towards designing individual care plans and interventions for them.

4.4 Early stimulation and development interventions

Objectives:

- To introduce participants to methods and materials for early stimulation and development activities.
- To enable caregivers to promote the development of skills and abilities in key domains of development through simple home-based activities.

Content:

The purpose of early stimulation is to aid the child's speech and language, socio-emotional and physical development, as well as enhance caregiver-child interactions. While early stimulation is important for all children, in every context, it is particularly important to children drawn from contexts of deprivation. These children have heightened vulnerability to developmental delays and deficits. The implementation of early stimulation activities within CCIs is critical as it helps children maintain their developmental trajectories—thereby, increasing their chances of being adopted and of the adoption (in terms of relations with the adoptive parents) being successful. This session therefore, enables caregivers in CCIs to obtain a conceptual understanding of early stimulation and to learn a plethora of early stimulation activities and skills for use with young children (those with and without developmental disabilities).

4.5 Understanding and Responding to Early Childhood Adversity and Trauma

Objectives:

- To understand adverse childhood experiences in early life, and the consequent psychological impacts it has on children's development and emotions.

- To explore and understand attachment concerns in institutionalized children.
- To use and adopt ‘correctional’ responses in interactions with children, enabling them to develop healthy attachment relationships in the future.

Content:

Institutionalized children often come from adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, abandonment, and neglect, which in young children can cause attachment-related traumas. When early childhood trauma and attachment issues remain unresolved, the child’s relationship with caregivers, including adoptive parents can be adversely affected—resulting in maladjustment of adopted children and parents, and heightened risk of in child ‘return’.

This session thus, acquaints participants with early childhood adversities, commonly experienced by young children (prior to institutionalization) and the adverse psychological consequences these have; it also helps them understand how institutional care, if not provided in ways that help children to overcome the effects of early attachment traumas, can heighten these emotional and behaviour problems in children, both within the institution and post adoption. It aims to equip caregivers with skills and techniques of response to infants and young children, in order to address early attachment and trauma issues.

4.6 Identification of Contexts of Young Children’s Emotional and Behavioural Problems

Objectives:

- To identify and analyze the psychosocial contexts of children’s emotional and behavioral issues.

- To understand how children perceive and internalize their experiences i.e., to listen to their inner voices, and how this manifests in emotional and behavioral issues.

Content:

A child's behavioural problem seldom occurs in isolation; there is always a reason why it occurs, a place or a context that it grew out of. This session forms the cornerstone to understand the basis of young children's emotional and behavioural concerns. In other words, why does a child behave the way he/she does? Participants are introduced to a simple, yet effective framework for child's behaviour analysis, comprising of key elements such as the child's context or universe, the experiences arising out of a given context, his/her internalizations of these experiences. Following on from the previous session on childhood adversity and trauma, the focus of this session will be on understanding how young children's emotional and behavioural states are a consequence of their (previous) difficult experiences of abandonment, loss, neglect and abuse.

4.7 Use of Communication Skills & Creative Methods with Young Children

Objective:

- To develop skills in the use of creative methods such as play, art and story-telling.

Content:

Depending age and stage of development, children do not always have the words, cognitive concepts or emotional awareness to name and convey complex feelings and experiences. Instead, they make sense of and communicate these through the world of play.

Children in the institutional care system, due to effects of abuse, neglect, trauma and insecurity of attachment, may have additional difficulties in communicating their feelings and concerns.

It is therefore, essential for caregivers in young child institutions to be able to use alternative ways of communication with children i.e. methods that involve non-verbal methods like play and art, and other creative methods such as story-telling and puppets. This session will focus on enabling caregivers to use multiple mediums and play methods to engage with young children, with a view to helping young children express themselves and their (difficult) experiences. Again, providing young children with spaces to express their emotions and resolving early childhood trauma is critical to successful adoption i.e. adjustment with the adoptive family (if the child were to get adopted).

4.8 Addressing Common Emotional and Behavioural Issues in Young Children

Objectives:

- Identifying signs and symptoms of common emotional and behavioural issues in young children.
- Managing and responding common emotional and behavioural issues.
- To use these methods as part of communication skills with young children, to enable them to express their emotions and experiences.

Content:

This module will equip caregivers with abilities and skills to identify and manage common emotional and behavioural issues in young children. These disorders pertain to temper tantrums, anxiety, and anger. It will also introduce caregivers to simple activities that may be implemented (also from a preventive perspective) to enhance socio-emotional development of young children.

Phase 2: Child Adoption Counselling

The subsequent phase will follow on from the early childhood care and development modules to focusing on adoption issues.

4.9 How We Think about Adoption

Objectives:

- Examining and questioning our views on child institutionalization.
- Exploring our notions of family and the purpose of adoption thereof.
- Emphasizing the importance of child-centric principles in the implementation of adoption processes.

Content:

Many of our views of adoption are related to our notions of family. The relatively conservative family culture in India does not support adoption, let alone promote it as an ideal or even an equal option to a biological child. However, the State, and therefore, its child care institutions are mandated to promote adoption, particularly based on the objectives of de-institutionalization.

This session is aimed at enabling adoption counsellors and social workers to reflect on issues of family and (de)institutionalization and their linkages with how we promote and implement child adoption. It encourages participants to examine and question their biases and prejudices on child institutionalization and adoption, so as to finally guide them to certain key principles that child adoption should be predicated on i.e., child safety and best interests rather than deinstitutionalization imperatives.

4.10 Essential Adoption Laws and Procedures in India

Objectives:

- To undertake a brief overview of the relevant laws, procedures and regulations constituting the adoption system in India.
- To understand the contexts of application and provide clarity on the scope of the relevant adoption laws.
- To understand the statutory roles and responsibilities of different duty-bearers in each part of the adoption process.

Content:

Keeping in mind the context of laws pertaining to guardianship and adoption i.e., its chronological development in accordance with personal law, this session will develop an understanding of the relevance of application of personal law in the context of adoptions. Significantly, this session will provide a comprehensive account of the imperative for adoption procedures under the JJ Act, in terms of facilitating decision-making in the 'best interest' of the child and the scope of its application to vulnerable children across various types of adoptions, including domestic adoptions, inter-country adoptions, relative adoptions, OAS adoptions (orphaned, abandoned and surrendered children), amongst others.

While examining these procedures, this session will provide a stakeholder-specific account of the roles and responsibilities of concerned decision-making authorities, particularly in light of the

Juvenile Justice (Amendment) Act, 2021 and the Adoption (Amendment) Regulations Act, 2021.

4.11 Finding the Right Family: Implementing Assessments and Home Studies of Prospective Adoptive Parents

Objectives:

- Identifying appropriate (prospective) adoptive parents.
- Understanding how to assess parental capacities through the use of systematic methods and protocols.
- Implementing home studies.

Content:

Since identification of the 'right' family (not the perfect one!) is the key to successful adoption. Home studies and systematic assessments of the capacities of (prospective) adoptive parents is a critical start to adoption processes. This session will enable participants to understand the objectives of a home study and implement it within frameworks of learnings and understandings pertaining to 'good parenting' and parental capacities. Participants will work through understanding the elements of the home study, namely: (a) core assessments that help make decisions on whether PAPs should be considered for child adoption (readiness for adoption, health, marital relationship, employment and finances etc); (b) additional assessments that would help understand PAP's circumstances and needs for pre-adoption counselling and post-adoption support (such as knowledge of parenting, daily routines, views on religion...). The aim is for adoption counsellors to be able to implement these assessments along with those routinely provided as per the CARA documentation requirements. Together, these will make for more detailed and comprehensive home studies and PAPs assessments; thereby, ensuring safe, happy and successful adoption experiences for children (and parents).

4.12 Pre-adoption Counselling with PAPs (A): Discussing developmental concerns and needs of children with PAPs

Objectives:

- To respond to PAPs' queries and questions regarding adoption of developmental delays and deficits.
- To prepare PAPs for adopting children, whether from regular or special needs categories, by providing them with an understanding of (a given) child's developmental status and needs thereof.

Content:

This session focuses on two aspects of pre-adoption counselling pertaining to children with developmental delays and deficits—an issue that is often neglected, but which can have problematic consequences for children and PAPs, if not made explicit prior to adoption. The first relates to the decision-making at the time a child is matched to PAPs and the latter when they are asked to make a decision on 'accepting' the child and moving ahead with the adoption processes—psychoeducation to the PAPs is critical at this stage as they need to decide whether they have the ability and resources to meet the child's needs, as they make decisions on adoption. The second point of time in which psychoeducation and counselling on the child's developmental needs and concerns is provided to PAPs is when they may have decided to go ahead with the adoption and are ready to receive the child. The aim of this session is NOT to discourage PAPs from adopting children with developmental disabilities, but for caregivers/ counsellors to make them aware of what parenting such children will entail, thereby, increasing their readiness for the special considerations and challenges they would face in parenting and family contexts.

4.13 Pre-Adoption Counselling with PAPs (B): Addressing Dilemmas of Adoption Disclosure in PAPs

Objectives:

- To enable PAPs to explore their worries and concerns about adoption disclosure, and address them appropriately.
- To provide PAPs with guidance and methods on how to disclose adoption to their child.

Content:

One of the issues that tend to create much worry and anxiety in adoptive parents is that of disclosure of adoption to the child. There are also many misconceptions therefore, that surround this issue, mainly that it is best to keep the adoption a ‘secret’ i.e. to not disclose to the child, in case the child ‘becomes upset’ and it creates difficulty in parent-child relationships. This module therefore, equips caregivers and adoption counsellors on ways in which to discuss the importance of adoption disclosure with PAPs and adoptive parents, as well as with methods and materials for use in adoption disclosure. SAMVAD has developed various stories relating to adoption and disclosure issues—these will be shared in the session, along with guidance on their use with children.

4.14 Pre-Adoption Counselling with PAPs (C): Readiness for the Child to Come Home

Objectives:

- Enabling PAPs to prepare for the adoption by:
 - Setting expectations for parenting.
 - Talking to immediate family and friends about the adoption.

- Helping PAPs with what to do when the child arrives, with regard to physical spaces and care, and emotional care and responses.

Content:

While the long wait is finally over and PAPs are excited to be able to bring their adopted child home at last, they may often have worries about what to tell extended family and friends regarding the adoption and other concerns about the care of their new child. They may also have concerns regarding how to take care of their newly adopted child, especially one that may be under-nourished and under-stimulated, or one that is from a different cultural and linguistic background. This session focuses on how to enable PAPs to help infants and/or young children to successfully transition from the child care institution to their home and family. It discusses issues of preparation for the child's arrival, and responding to the child's physical, nutritional and socio-emotional needs in the immediate aftermath of the adoption, including facilitating parental attachment and bonding with the child, and dealing with special issues such as the (re)naming of (older) children and religious practices of (older) children.

4.15 Pre-adoption Counselling with Preschool-Age Children

Objectives:

- To enable children to address (previous) experiences of trauma.
- To prepare them for leaving the child care institution and their present caregivers, and to go to a new home and family.

Content:

As discussed in erstwhile modules, (older) children in the institution may have already had many life experiences—some of them exceedingly traumatic, such as abandonment/ loss/ separation; and contrary to what is believed about children, they have memories of these past experiences. If children are not assisted to address these traumatic life experiences prior to the adoption, and they continue to have unresolved emotional issues, these serve as barriers to adjusting to a new home and family. Furthermore, separation from familiar people i.e. the caregivers of the CCI now, and re-location to unknown spaces, including to new families (following adoption), can be exceedingly traumatic for children. This session thus addresses these issues, to ensure that the child is prepared to move to adoptive family. It is focused on children who are 3 years and above, through the use of a set of stories that SAMVAD has developed to enable children to deal with their difficult life experiences and to prepare for their new home and family.

4.16 Miscellaneous Issues Relating to Older Child Adoption and ‘Return’ of Adopted Children

Objectives:

- To understand the specific issues in older child adoption and to take a child-centric approach in facilitating these adoptions.
- To assist children where adoptions do not work-out and children are ‘returned’ to the child care institution.

Content:

This session focuses on miscellaneous issues pertaining to adoption. One of them relates to older child adoption i.e. children who are above the ages of 8 years. In recent years, ever since CARA extended the age of adoption to 18 years. Many older child-

-ren and adolescents however, are reluctant to move from the CCI to families, particularly as they have already formed attachments and deep social networks within the institutions. Adoptive families also experience many challenges in adjusting to the socio-emotional states of older children. This session thus addresses these problems, discussing the need for child-centric approaches in adoption decision-making in such situations.

The other part of this session addresses the issue of children being 'returned' to the CCI i.e. when adoptive families are unable to establish the requisite relationships with the child, and the adoption does not work out. The session makes recommendations on how to assist children through such difficult situations of distress and rejection, when separated from the adoptive family and placed back in the child care institution.

4.17 Applying Adoption Laws & Procedure in India

Objectives:

- To understand the fields of application of different adoption laws and regulations and discuss relevant case laws to clarify questions pertaining to overlapping jurisdictions.
- To understand implementation-related aspects of the adoptions process.

Content:

Following a statutory overview of the adoptions system in India, in addition to issues pertaining to pre-adoption counselling and the 'return' of adopted children, this session will examine the current challenges in the implementation of the adoptions laws and procedures and provide an account of relevant case law and case studies to assist decision-makers in the implementation of these laws.

Significantly, this session will provide a transdisciplinary perspective to guide decision-making in the 'best interest' of the child, while specifically discussing the role of key processes such as pre-adoption counselling and systematic assessments in securing robust adoption decisions. This session will also utilize these case laws and examples to provide a roadmap on mitigating challenges in implementation, in addition to frameworks for guiding decision-making of District Magistrates in the context of adoption orders.

4.18 Film Screening and Discussion

Objectives:

- To gain deeper knowledge of the impact of child adoption.
- To reflect on issues of field relevance pertaining to adoption.

Content:

Two films will be screened during the course of the training program, both of which provide perspectives on child adoption. The screening of these films will be followed by intensive discussions, that will assist participants to examine various themes relating to adoption work. These films reflect various themes such as the adoption of young children into families that did not always understand the feelings of the child, adopted children's emotions and challenges in adjusting to a new family, relationships with birth parents and what makes a family a family. They enable participants, in essence, to view the world through the eyes of children, thereby, aiding them to adopt a child-centric approach to dealing with adoption.

These film screenings and discussions are aimed at enabling participants to consolidate their conceptual learning on adoption. Also, facilitating deeper reflection on practical realities and challenges in adoption work. Participants will also learn the use of experiential methodologies like film screenings and discussions that have both appeal and effectiveness in their own therapeutic and pedagogical practices.



5. Training Schedules

5.1 Online Training Schedule

Phase 1: Early Childhood Development & Care for Children in Difficult Circumstances

Theme & Content	Sessions
Early Child Development: From theory to practice	1
Developmental problems & disabilities in young children (A)	2
Developmental problems & disabilities in young children (B)	3
Developmental assessment of children	4
Early stimulation and development interventions	5
Orientation to early childhood adversity and trauma	6
Identification of contexts of young children's emotional and behavioural problems	7
Use of communication skills & creative methods with young children	8
Addressing common emotional and behavioural issues in young children (A)	9
Addressing common emotional and behavioural issues in young children (B)	10

Phase 2: Child Adoption Counselling

Theme & Content	Sessions
How we think about adoption	11
Essential Adoption Laws and Procedures in India	12
Film screening and discussion	13
Finding the Right Family: implementing assessments and home studies for Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs)	14
Pre-adoption Counselling with PAPs (A): Discussing developmental concerns and needs of children with PAPs	15
Pre-Adoption Counselling with PAPs (B) Addressing dilemmas of adoption disclosure in PAPs	16
Pre-Adoption Counselling with PAPs (C): In readiness for the child to come home	17
Pre-adoption counselling with preschool-age children	18
Film screening and discussion	19
Miscellaneous issues relating to older child adoption and 'return' of adopted children	20
Applying Adoption Laws & Procedure in India	21

Individual sessions are for a duration of 3 hours

5.2 In- Person Training Schedule

Phase 1: Early Childhood Development & Care for Children in Difficult Circumstances

Day	Time	Theme & Content
1	9:00 am—9:30 am	Introduction of training & objectives
	9:30 am—11:00 am	Orientation and sensitization to early childhood experiences
	11:00 am—11:15am	Tea Break
	11:15 am—1:00 pm	Early child development: From theory to practice
	1:00 pm —2:00 pm	Lunch
	2:00 pm —3:15 pm	Early child development: From theory to practice (continued...)
	3:15 pm —5:00 pm	Film screening and discussion
2	9:00 am —1:00 pm	Developmental problems & disabilities in young children (A)
	1:00 pm —2:00 pm	Lunch
	1:00 pm —5:00 pm	Developmental problems & disabilities in young children (B)
3	9:00 am—12:30 pm	Developmental assessment of children
	12:30 pm —1:30 pm	Lunch
	1:30 pm—5:00 pm	Early stimulation and development interventions
4	9:00 am —12:00 pm	Orientation to early childhood adversity and trauma
	12:00 pm —1:00 pm	Lunch
	1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Identification of contexts of young children’s emotional and behaviour problems
	3:15 pm – 5:15 pm	Use of communication skills & creative methods with young children

Day	Time	Theme & Content
5	9:00 am—1:00 pm	Addressing common emotional and behavioural issues in young children (A)
	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm	Lunch
	2:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Addressing common emotional and behavioural issues in young children (B)
Phase 2: Child Adoption Counselling		
6	9:00 am —10:00 am	Re-cap of Phase 1
	10:00 am --12:00 pm	How we think about adoption
	1:00 pm —2:00 pm	Lunch
	2:00 pm —5:30 pm	Essential Adoption Laws and Procedures in India
7	9:00 am —1:00 pm	Finding the Right Family: Implementing assessments and home studies for Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs)
	2:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Film screening and discussion
8	9:00 am —11:00 am	Pre-adoption Counselling with PAPs (A): Discussing developmental concerns and needs of children with PAPs
	11:00 am – 1:15 pm	Pre-Adoption Counselling with PAPs (B): Addressing Dilemmas of Adoption Disclosure in PAPs
	1:15 pm—2:15 pm	Lunch
	2:15 pm —5:15 pm	Pre-Adoption Counselling with PAPs (C): In readiness for the child to come home

Day	Time	Theme & Content
9	9:00 am—12:00 am	Pre-adoption Counselling with preschool age children
	12:00pm—1:00pm	Lunch
	1:00pm—4:00pm	Film screening and discussion
10	9:00 am –10:30 am	Miscellaneous issues relating to older child adoption and ‘return’ of adopted children
	10:45 pm —1:15 pm	Applying Adoption Laws & Procedure in India



6. Training Methodology

The training program uses a range of creative and participatory methods ranging from role plays and discussions to video and film screenings, case study analysis; and experiential methodologies of visualization, simulation and story-telling. Didactic methods, such as lectures are used minimally, mostly for the purpose of introducing theoretical and conceptual frameworks that are essential for learning and field practice. The major emphasis of the training methodology is on skill-building, to enable participants to translate theory and concept into practice, in their work and interactions with children.



7. Mode of Program Delivery

Both online and in-person training programs are delivered by SAMVAD, through a multi-disciplinary team comprising members drawn from expertise in psychology, psychiatry, social work, and law.

7.1 Online Training Programs

SAMVAD has established a virtual knowledge network (VKN) set-up, and this platform will be used for the implementation of the proposed training program. To maintain the quality of the training, and the interactive nature that assists learning, the maximum number of participants in a given group is capped at 50. Each learning session is typically of a duration of 3 hours on pre-scheduled or pre-agreed days and times. These synchronous learning sessions may range from being twice or thrice a week (in some instances, five times a week), based on the agreement with the agency requesting the program and/or the feasibility and convenience of SAMVAD and the participants.

Rules of Participation & Engagement for Online Programs

- Attendance of a session is counted as being online/ on the session for a minimum of 160 out of 180 minutes. There is always a next time, so don't worry!
- If more than 2 sessions are missed, a participant would be unable to continue on the program...
- Participants dropping out due to non-attendance of sessions are welcome to join another training program but all sessions would need to be attended again.
- Participants missing a session are expected to catch up by watching the recorded session.

7.2 In-Person Training Programs

SAMVAD is happy to conduct in-person programs in NIMHANS and/or in other state venues. These are typically all-day programs that run from 9 am to 6:30 pm, and may be implemented over the course of 3, 5 or 10 days, depending on the nature of the program. For instance, a longer training program that may have over 20 sessions, may be broken into blocks or smaller components that might run for 3 days at a time i.e. one block is followed by the next one that may be held a month or two later. Again, in order to ensure training quality, the number of participants is capped at 50 and the minimum number of participants required is 35.

Rules of Participation & Engagement for In-person Program

- 100% attendance is mandatory i.e. no session may be missed.
- In case of any health emergency, the participant is required to inform the NIMHANS-SAMVAD team so that due assistance may be provided.
- Should any participant have an emergency of any other type, and have to discontinue the training program, they may duly inform the SAMVAD-NIMHANS team, who will also communicate the same to the institution concerned.
- Requests to facilitators to be exempted from sessions will not be entertained—as the program does not allow for skipping of any sessions/ activities (except in case of a health emergency)
- Participants are expected to be punctual and at the training venue by 8:50 am, in order to allow for the training to start on time, at 9 am. A grace of 15 minutes will be permitted about 3 times during the entire duration of the program.
- Participants arriving later than 15 minutes will NOT be permitted to join the session—in which case they will be unable to meet the mandatory 100% attendance requirements

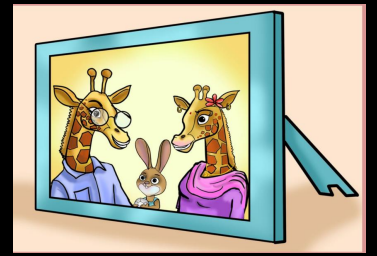
8. Certification

Upon completion of the training program, participants will be provided with a 'Certificate of Participation'. Successful participation and completion of the program entails adherence to all rules and ways of work as detailed above.

9. Financial Resources & Support

As a National Initiative & Integrated Resource for Child Protection, Mental Health and Psychosocial Care, SAMVAD is mandated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, to provide standardized training programs and related technical support on child mental health and protection issues. Therefore, there are no financial liabilities, by way of resource/training fees or honorariums either for online or in-person training programs, on any government departments/agencies, or national programs. For the same reason, no agency/system who we assist requires an MoU with NIMHANS or with our Initiative. We are mandated to assist all agencies requiring/approaching us for support.

While online training programs therefore entail no cost, in-person training initiatives would entail organizational and logistical expenditure. In such instances, expenditure relating to the training participants' travel, accommodation and related logistics, including venue etc. would require to be borne by the agency requesting or organizing the training program. The SAMVAD team's travel and accommodation may require be wholly or partially supported by the organizing agency, particularly if the training is for non-governmental agencies; in certain circumstances, where feasible and justifiable, SAMVAD could undertake the training by also bearing the expenditure for its team (this is subject to discussion on a case-by-case basis).



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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/childprotectnimhans>



Twitter: https://twitter.com/nimhans_CPC



LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nimhanschildprotection>



Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/nimhanschildprotect>

