

Na'ama Yehuda, MSC, Speech Language Pathologist



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Clinical Interventions in Adoption – The Speech Language Pathologist’s perspective

Abstract:

Trauma and posttraumatic coping can complicate and impact children’s ability to attach, regulate, and communicate their needs. Adopted children almost inevitably experience attachment disruption, and many have histories of maltreatment, deal with disabilities, and have suffered missed opportunities for “good enough” development of language and communication. Those issues do not disappear with adoption. Moreover, when change of language, culture, and affiliation are added to the mix, the tasks that adopted children and their families face become even more complex. While no two children or adoptive families are alike, there are some processes that many if not most are called to cope with, and where clinicians can offer support.

This three-hour clinical presentation will discuss the role of Speech-Language Pathologists in adoption: from pre-adoption consults and exploration of ways to optimize connection, through the learning curve of the adoption period itself, and into managing expectations and realities post-adoption. The interplay of language, attachment, and communication will be discussed, along with how those can get disrupted and impacted by the realities of adoption. The layered issues of first vs. second language acquisition will be explored, as well as suggestions for age-appropriate and developmentally relevant language, communication, and attachment interventions. The specific dynamics of international adoption, institutionalization, special needs, and unknown histories will be examined. Topics such as assessment limitations and differential diagnosis will be touched upon. Throughout the presentation, case studies and clinical vignettes will be utilized as means to elucidate strategies for optimizing attachment and regulation, reducing miscommunication, decreasing confusion, and bolstering repair. Attendees questions and participation will be encouraged.

Note: Interested attendees are encouraged to view a previous presentation: [**“Does he even know how to be loved?”: Challenges in adoptions of traumatized children**](#), from June 3, 2020, which offers an introduction to the topic and can serve as a foundation for this clinical presentation.

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Presenter Bio:

Na'ama Yehuda, MSC, SLP, is a speech-language pathologist and an audiologist by training with 30 years' experience. A clinician in private practice in New York City, she specializes in pediatric populations, and has special interest and expertise in the connections between communication, language, attachment, and the effects of early childhood adversity and trauma on development, co-morbidity, clinical presentations and therapeutic processes. She consulted for the New York City Department of Education, often with highly vulnerable populations. She provides professional development and consultations on communication, language, trauma, and development, to colleagues, parents, and educators, as well to health and mental-health personnel; internationally. Ms. Yehuda is often called to consult on and teach about selective mutism, medical trauma, prenatal exposures, international adoptions, and other complex clinical presentations. She is fluent in Hebrew and English and is a bilingually trained clinician. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees (Cum laude) from Tel-Aviv University, and was the recipient of the Rubinshtein Award for Excellence. She is a licensed Speech Language Pathologist in New York State since 1999 and maintains a Communication Disorders Clinician license (Speech Language Pathology & Audiology) in Israel since 1989.

Ms. Yehuda had been elected to and served on the boards of directors of the Israeli Speech Hearing Language Association (ISHLA) and the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation (ISSTD). She is a member of her State's professional organization (NYSSLHA) and remains a contributing member of ISHLA. She chaired and volunteers on taskforces and committees, and currently co-chairs the Child and Adolescent Committee of ISSTD, the Child and Adolescent Special Interest Group, and the ISSTDNYC component group. She received the Distinguished Achievement Award from the ISSTD at 2011 and was made an ISSTD Fellow in 2012. She is a recipient of the ISSTD President's Award (2014).

Na'ama writes and publishes in her various areas of expertise. She is often contacted by publishers to review book proposals and manuscripts. In 2005, the Journal of Trauma and Dissociation published her landmark article: "The Language of Dissociation." A few years later she was among a group of internationally recognized child-trauma experts who contributed to "Dissociation in Traumatized Children and Adolescents: Theory and clinical interventions" (Wieland, S. editor, Routledge Psychological Stress Series). Her own book, "Communicating Trauma: Clinical presentations and interventions with traumatized children," received the ISSTD's Written Media Award for 2016. Ms. Yehuda's writings have been translated into several languages and have become required and recommended reading in various courses in childhood trauma. She also writes and publishes fiction. Among colleagues in the Communication Disorders and Mental Health fields, Na'ama is considered a pioneer in bridging gaps of information and collaboration between disciplines, and an advocate on behalf of children everywhere.