**CULTURAL IDENTITY AND MATCHING IN FOSTERING AND ADOPTION**

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| **Objectives** |
| * Explore the importance of reflective discussions in relation to cultural identity when thinking about matching in adoption and fostering. * To provide real-life scenarios that aid participants in exploring options available for the child(ren), including what the priorities are for them. * Reflect on practice and how decisions regarding cultural identity are recorded. |

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| **Target audience** |
| * Placement planning/matching/care planning teams * Fostering duty teams * Professionals in fostering and adoption teams. |

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| **Guidance** |
| * This is a guide so you may not want to use/ask every question. * Take action points away from this. What can you do with the information? * Think about potential outcomes and be prepared to offer additional support, for example thinking about additional VR experiences for use in another session. |

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| **Preparation** |
| * Always prepare before delivery – i.e. what’s your objective? Are participants aware of what to expect? Do they know what VR is? Are they comfortable with you using VR with them? * Introduce VR. Talk about what “fully immersive” means, for example it puts you into the perspective of a person/child. 360-degree viewing allows you to see things from a different perspective. * Have you made participants aware of related health warnings, emotional (some videos contain distressing content and/or may cause feelings of anger/upset/fear) and physical (does the participant have any health issues that may be affected by using VR?). * Explain other pre-viewing tips (e.g. stay seated/freedom to remove headset at any point/ look around to get the full experience). * Explain the headset and controller. * Ensure access to evaluation and consent forms. * Follow up and continuation of learning from sessions is key to delivering change. |

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| **Closing the session and follow-up** |
| * Complete evaluations. * Check in with the participant(s) about how they are feeling following the VR experience(s) and the conversations you have had. * Let them know who they can call for support, e.g. if anything comes up for them following the visit. * Let them know you will follow up with them within the following working week to check in following the visit. * The session could be recorded by practitioners as part of their evidence for CPD. |

1. **RAYLEIGH’S JOURNEY**

**A group of children in school uniforms

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| **Follow Rayleigh’s journey and consider the key priorities for her. Read Rayleigh’s life journey as preparation for this session. Watch Carnaby Street, School Triggers, Therapeutic Approach at Home, Rayleigh Style B at School, then discuss** |
| * What is Rayleigh’s ethnicity and cultural identity? * Who is Rayleigh currently living with in Carnaby Street, Therapeutic At Home? What is her known experience? * What would you expect to see or observe which would indicate Rayleigh’s identity needs are being met? * What type of home does Rayleigh need? (E.g. two parents, single parent, ethnicity, other children in placement, etc.) * What considerations about Rayleigh’s intersecting identity would there need to be in respect of Rayleigh’s foster home? What would need to be considered as part of her transition to a permanent home? * What if each of Rayleigh’s “placements” reflected different aspects of her culture and ethnicity? How would this help or hinder the transition? * What would Rayleigh need in place to support her cultural identity? * How would you record the decision made, which would help Rayleigh understand if she were to access her files in adulthood? * Are these considerations the same for every child, for example a child with an Albanian/Eritrean background? |

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| **Resources/further reading** |
| * Article 20 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care and must be looked after properly, by people who respect their ethnic group, religion, culture and language. * Children should be placed with families who can reflect their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identities and promote these factors, as well as those who can help them navigate racial and other stereotypes.” (CoramBAAF) * “Too many children are sent far from their communities, are matched with homes that cannot provide them with what they need, and too frequently this results in yet another adult failing to stick with them.” (Independent Review of Children’s Social Care, May 2022) * <https://corambaaf.org.uk/books/matching-child-early-permanence-placement-importance-identity> * <https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/WWCSC_Matching_Foster_Care_Systematic_Review_Aug2021.pdf> * <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/933179/Matching_in_foster_care.pdf> * <https://fosteringandadoption.rip.org.uk/topics/matching/> |