

# DRIVING CHANGE IN ADOPTION

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## Contact

If you have questions regarding the organization of this National Think Tank convening, please contact Selfless Love Foundation's Advocacy Director James Minter at [jminter@selflesslovefoundation.org](mailto:jminter@selflesslovefoundation.org). If you have questions regarding the content of this report, please contact Yvonne Fox ([yfox@chapinhall.org](mailto:yfox@chapinhall.org)) or Courtney Wayman ([cwayman@chapinhall.org](mailto:cwayman@chapinhall.org)).

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## DEAR COLLEAGUES,

We are writing to share *Driving Change in Adoption*, a report developed through the National Think Tank on Adoption Policy convened by the Selfless Love Foundation in partnership with Chapin Hall and the Child Welfare League of America.

For nearly 30 years, since the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) was enacted in 1997, federal legislation shaping state adoption policy and practice has seen few comprehensive reforms. This is even as technology, access to information, and expectations around children's privacy and protection have evolved significantly. During this time, many states have recognized the importance of minor consent at the point of adoption finalization. That recognition raises a broader question that lived experience leaders across the country have raised for years, and one that sits at the center of this work. Why are youth rights acknowledged only at the endpoint, rather than throughout the adoption journey where decisions about safety, identity, and permanence are made?

At the core of this work is a shared belief that young people, particularly those in foster care, have the right to understand and exercise agency over how their personal information is shared, how they are represented, and who is granted access to their information. These are not abstract considerations. They are fundamental to safety, dignity, and long-term well-being. Young people should be able to share who they are in ways that make sense to them as individuals, while those pursuing adoption should be vetted to know they are not only well intentioned but safe. This requires more than individual agency. Even where rights are recognized, young people cannot be expected to carry the responsibility of protection alone. That responsibility rests with adults and systems to ensure the resources and safeguards necessary to support young people's physical and virtual safety.

The National Think Tank on Adoption Policy was intentionally designed to center these principles through shared leadership and cocreation. Members of the Planning Committee, including individuals with lived experience of adoption from foster care alongside system leaders and researchers, helped shape both the structure of the convening and the content reflected in this report. Participants from across the country engaged in dialogue grounded in lived experience and informed by system expertise to examine how rights, safety, and agency are currently upheld and where gaps remain.

This report is intended to support reflection and action among policymakers, system leaders, practitioners, advocates, and young adults working to modernize adoption policy and practice. We invite you to read it with these principles in mind and to consider how rights, safety, and agency are embedded or absent within your own policies, practices, and decision making.

Sincerely,

*The National Think Tank on Adoption Policy Planning Committee*



## FRAMING

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Selfless Love Foundation is a national nonprofit that leverages resources, expertise, and proven solutions to improve the child welfare system, creating opportunities for more foster youth to find their forever families and thrive in adulthood. In service of this mission, Selfless Love convened national and state partners to collaborate with lived experts and identify innovative adoption policy and practice strategies across five core discussion areas: photolistings of children awaiting adoption, consent and consultation, engaging diverse communities in recruitment, supporting prospective adoptive families, and postadoption support.

Each of the five discussion topics was selected with deliberate emphasis due to their direct impacts on the safety, dignity, and long-term outcomes of youth in the adoption process. Photolistings were examined in the context of concerns surrounding confidentiality, dignity, and respect for children, particularly given the public nature of recruitment platforms. Resources from AdoptUSKids also echo these concerns, noting “underlying photolisting practices are two key principles: (1) the privacy of the child and others in their life must be respected, and (2) information must be honestly disclosed” (2003). Beyond these principles, the minimum privacy standards for photo-listed children and youth are not specified and greatly vary by state.

Consent and consultation practice are central to ensuring children exercise their right to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives, including decisions on photolistings and adoption. Proceeding without a child’s informed consent can place youth at increased risk of harm. This risk highlights the need for consistent and ethical standards across statewide adoption practices. Engaging diverse communities in recruitment was prioritized because the foster care system serves children from a wide range of cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Reaching equitable outcomes requires a diverse and well-supported pool of qualified prospective foster and adoptive families.

Supporting prospective adoptive families emerged as a critical focus due to the high rate of caregiver attrition. There is an estimated turnover rate in foster families of between 30 and 50% (Christian, 2002; Gibbs & Wildfire, 2007), often because of insufficient connection to personal, peer, and professional support (Williams et al., 2023). Eliminating these gaps in support is essential to family retention and overall placement stability. Further, postadoption support was also identified as a necessary intervention to help mitigate adoption dissolution and to promote long-term family stability, which remains central to the well-being of every child.

The Planning Committee, composed of youth with lived experience and child welfare professionals, dedicated 2 years of preparation to design a youth-centered convening in Broomfield, CO. Their work focused on creating an inclusive, tailored, and trauma-informed environment that prioritized the voices of lived experts and incorporated their feedback into discussions on adoption policy and practice.

The “Approach and Findings” section of this report will specifically examine how current practice and policy is misaligned with the five key principles outlined in this section. The “Recommendations” section of this report summarizes the key policy and practice enhancement opportunities captured from this convening, which reflect participant perspectives informed by both lived experience and child welfare professional practice, and are intentionally aligned with national adoption best practices.

For more detailed information about the Think Tank’s 2-day agenda and the structured breakout room approach see [Appendix B](#).

## APPROACH AND FINDINGS

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The Think Tank’s purpose was to collect actionable strategies to enhance how adoptions are conducted, supported, and sustained after legal permanency. To achieve this goal, the Think Tank structure included presentations providing an overview of existing federal and state adoption policy and adoption practice approaches. These were followed by breakout room sessions with guided questions to explore the five key topic areas (photolistings of children awaiting adoption, consent and consultation, engaging diverse communities in recruitment, supporting prospective adoptive families, and postadoption support). Table 1 presents a high-level summary of the themes consistent across the five key topic areas, including the lived expert panel, the policy and practice presentations, and the breakout room discussions.

**Table 1. Summary of 5 Key Topics Cross-Cutting from the Think Tank**

Overarching Theme	Description
 <p><b>Youth voice and choice</b></p>	<p>The adoption process should center the needs and wants of children and young people in a developmentally, age-appropriate way to inform their decision making before (during the education and consent stage), during (recruitment, profile development), and after legal adoption (post-adoption services and support).</p>
 <p><b>Privacy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people should be meaningfully informed of their options for the public or private posting of their profile and should be encouraged to consent to the level of privacy they are comfortable with.</li> <li>• States should adopt mechanisms (for example, background checks, training completion, etc.) to vet prospective families prior to providing access to profiles of children/youth awaiting adoption.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Data and accountability</b></p>	<p>States should establish a regular cadence for proactive data tracking and sharing related to preadoptive disruptions, children’s re-entry into foster care due adoption dissolutions, and provision of post-adoption services. States should use this data to inform decisions to deploy targeted pre and post adoption resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States should establish a process for collecting and sharing data on youth’s satisfaction with the quality of adoption consultation practice and on families’ satisfaction with their adoption preparation, support, and process.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Clear, standard policy outlining rights and processes</b></p>	<p>States should have clear policy that outlines the rights of adoptees; the process before, during, and after adoption; the practice expectations required for adoption professionals to obtain informed consent and consult a child or young person during the adoption process; and the services available post adoption.</p>
 <p><b>Tailored, timely, consistent communication and education</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate preparation of families for adoption through setting realistic expectations and timely, trauma-focused education.</li> <li>• Deliver consistent, digestible, proactive communication about the support available to youth and adoptive families before, during, and after adoption finalization.</li> <li>• Deploy preventive, post-adoption outreach to offer stabilizing services and reduce crisis-driven intervention</li> </ul>

The remainder of this section offers detailed findings generated from the breakout room sessions related to each topic area of focus for the Think Tank. For more in-depth summary of findings related to each topic area of focus, see the Action Steps Summary.

## Consent and Consultation

Consent and consultation practice operationalizes the key principles of youth agency and dignity when making decisions that directly affect their lives. Participants underscored the importance of having a clear, consistent process to obtain informed consent from a child or young person considering adoption, along with a specified practice for meaningful consultation and collaborative decision making between a child or young person and their adult supports in the adoption process.

**Explore consent early and often.** Participants reported adoption consent and consultation processes should begin early and be revisited whenever a key decision is made related to a child or young person's permanency. In a survey distributed to lived experts prior to the convening, nearly 95% of respondents agreed that youth should be asked for their consent before professionals post their information on adoption photolisting websites. Additionally, almost 70% of respondents felt that a child or young person's consent should be reaffirmed every 3–6 months. Further summary of lived expert survey results, which are used for contextual input in this report, can be found in the Lived Expert Survey Results tool.

**Specialized training.** Effective training was recommended for adoption professionals to help a child or young person understand the full adoption process, why adoption is a potential permanency option, how adoption may impact their contact with biological family, and what decisions or actions they can consent to or refuse consent for in the adoption process.

**Clear checks/balances.** Participants recommended developing a consent form detailing the information covered in a consent conversation. The form should be signed by the child or young person, their adoption case worker, and an adult support of the child's choice.

**Tiered consent practice based on age.** In a survey distributed to lived experts prior to the convening, 50% of respondents agreed the minimum age for a child to provide information or revoke consent for a photolisting should be 10 years old, with 40% of respondents favoring a minimum age of 12 or 14+ for photolisting consent. If a child revoked their consent for photolisting, 75% agreed that then the child's listing should be removed immediately.

**Developmentally appropriate consultation.** Participants felt strongly that consultation practice should include developmentally appropriate collaboration with a young person to design content for their adoption profile. Participants also thought young people should decide what information they prefer to share with vetted families.

## Photolisting Practice

This section highlights participants' concerns about children and youth's right to privacy, dignity and choice, shared by both lived experts and child welfare professionals. In response to these concerns, participants also reimagined a variety of practice and policy approaches that align with national recommendations for effective photolisting practice.

**Consent process and periodic listing review.** In a survey provided to lived experts prior to the convening, 75% agreed that if a child revoked their consent for photolisting, then their listing should be removed immediately. Participants advised that each state should adopt an automatic, 6-month frequency for profile review with a child or young person, with the option for a child or young person to also request a review, a profile update, or

the removal of their profile at any time during their adoption process. In response to a child or young person's request to review, update, or remove their profile, participants felt that the child or young person should receive timely response (within 5 business days) from their adoption professional or adult support, with an estimated time for completing their request.

**Security and privacy protection.** Access to full adoption profiles (description, photolisting, etc.) restricted to families already vetted (via background check and completion of minimum training standards) by an adoption agency or child welfare agency.

**Innovative approaches to represent child/young person holistically.** Participants also recommended innovative photolisting strategies that center a child's or young person's personality, wants, and needs over their physical appearance. Noted innovative strategies included:

- **Artistic representations/personal statements.** Examples include: poetry, artwork, collage, vision board, personal statements about themselves and the type of family they are looking for, snippets of audio file interviews between the child/young person and an adult support, a list of accomplishments, activities and interests, and music playlists.
- **Structure creative experiences to learn about a child/young person.** [Reel Hope Project](#) spends a full day filming a child or young person doing an activity of their choice and edits a professional video reel. Children and youth can view the footage after production and decide if and how they would like the reel used in their profile.
- **Collaborate with a trusted adult.** Enable a child or young person to select a trusted adult support to assist in developing a written profile or to create an audio file interview with the child or young person. Participants recommended that the trusted adult support complete basic training to learn about strengths-based narrative writing and the adoptee's rights as well as the rights of their siblings. Trusted adults should have a basic understanding of how trauma affects a child or young person.

**“[We need a] dedicated advocate whose job is fidelity to a youth-empowered process. If we don't have that, it will be lost in the shuffle of this process. ”**

*-Lived Experience Panelist*

**Data collection process.** As there is no standard data collection process to measure the efficacy of photolistings, participants recommended collecting annual survey data on young people's satisfaction and experience with their adoption consent/consultation process to help improve the process. Similarly, participants recommended collecting outcomes data on photolistings to track the efficacy of innovative photolisting strategies compared to traditional photolistings.

## Targeted Recruitment

Participants emphasized that recruiting diverse families is essential to ensuring children and youth achieve permanency within families and communities that reflect and affirm their identities, relationships, and cultures.

**Demographic data-driven recruitment.** Participants acknowledged that many agencies lack a clear process to collect and share demographic data regarding children awaiting adoption to inform targeted, responsible recruitment. Some participants noted that misalignment, such as across jurisdictions, languages, or cultures and between recruited families, children, and youth underscores the need for diverse, transparent, and data-informed recruitment strategies.

**Kin- & child-specific recruitment.** Participants agreed that effective recruitment efforts must prioritize kin- and child-specific approaches, be rooted in culturally grounded practices, and intentionally address historical and ongoing harm that has affected trust in the adoption system. Participants recommended that recruitment efforts prioritize relational permanency by supporting lifelong connections for youth, such as maintaining sibling relationships and strengthening connections with extended family and other significant adults. Participants identified tools and practices, such as Family Find, that can be used to proactively identify and engage relatives and kin early in the permanency process. Participants also noted the importance of aligning recruitment resources with strategies that reduce barriers to placement of sibling groups, strengthen relationships within trusted community spaces, and expand outreach to and support of diverse family structures. They emphasized the importance of proactive communication and setting expectations with prospective families about the adoption process and availability of support.



**Natalie Clark MSW,  
Convening Facilitator and Lived Expert**

## Supporting Prospective Families

Participants agreed that sustaining engagement of prospective families in the adoption process is critical. They emphasized the following specific considerations:

**Consistent and proactive communication.** Participants shared that families are more likely to remain committed when they have a clear, realistic understanding of children's and youth's needs, and when available support is communicated consistently throughout the adoption journey. Identified proactive and transparent communication strategies included adjusting the pacing and delivery of education, training, and resources; normalizing hard conversations early and throughout the process; and acknowledging that feelings of fear, grief, or loss may occur.

**Continually emphasize available pre- and post-adoption support.** Participants also agreed that coordinating pre- and post-adoption services is needed to ensure continuity of support and help families feel prepared, supported, and confident. For example, some participants highlighted the value of “warm hand-off” models, where caseworkers and other staff intentionally coordinate transitions between each stage of the process to reduce gaps in communication and services.

## Post-Adoption Supports

Participants concurred that post-adoption support should center both the needs of the child or young person and the family, not one or the other.

**Proactively undertake outreach to address service “cliffs.”** Participants indicated that some families and youth experience a service “cliff” when they can no longer access vital resources previously funded by a public agency. Post-adoption support is necessary to promote family stability, well-being, and lifelong permanency and relationships beyond adoption finalization. Participants highlighted a need for proactive outreach to post-adoptive families about their options for accessible, community-based support, such as peer-to-peer support, resources external to child welfare, and economic and concrete support. The supports made available should respond to families’ evolving needs. In addition, proactive outreach and prevention-focused support were identified as key strategies to identify challenges early, reduce crisis-driven intervention, and ensure adoptive families and youth remain supported over time (example frameworks include QIC-AG Permanency Continuum Framework). Table 2 presents a summary of the effective post-adoption services identified by lived experts and child welfare professionals in breakout room discussions.

**There aren't [mental and behavioral health] specialists even available for families to try and get approved by Medicaid, and when there are, either the [child welfare] system already has a monopoly on the waitlists or Medicaid's approvals are so slow it's the same as being denied.**

*-Adoption Recruitment Professional*

**Table 2. Supports That Are Highly Effective Post Adoption**

Family-Specific Supports	Adoption Workforce Post-Adoption Practices
Peer-to-peer supports (for example, help lines, support groups, mentoring, and cohorts of connected families)  Family resource hubs and post-permanency centers	Contracting with lived experts to offer follow-up services to youth and families  Enhance preadoption finalization workforce practice to include development of a proactive prevention plan to identify future Title IV-E funded supports that can stabilize a family and reduce crisis intervention following adoption
Tuition waivers or other tuition support for youth	Crosstrain CPS hotline workers to recognize post-adoption families at intake and respond with prevention services
Extend health insurance and other benefits into adulthood for adopted youth	Check in with family via methods such as email, postcards, fridge magnets, and other reminders as the child ages
Respite care for families	Outreach to families at key junctures (for example, based on adoption dissolution data), including automatically 1 year after adoption
Ongoing financial support for discrete expenses (for example, camp fees for youth)	Connect in a personal way about available services
Family counseling with a provider trained in adoption competency (for example, C.A.S.E. provides adoption-competency training for child welfare professionals and advanced clinical training for mental health providers through <a href="#">Training for Adoption Competency (TAC)</a> , and also delivers direct clinical services to adoptive, foster, and kinship families)	Complete C.A.S.E.'s adoption competency training for child welfare [and adoption] professionals.  When referring families to mental and behavioral health services, verify the adoption competency of the provider.

**[After adoption] I remember having lots of play therapy. . . I wanted therapy that focused on how to blend a family on the basis of racial identity. . . I'm still on that journey to show up in my family and the Black community.**  
  
*-Lived Experience Panelist*

**Leverage Funding for Post-Adoption Supports.** Title IV-B, Subpart 1 provides flexible funding to support adoption through supports such as crisis intervention, adoption promotion, adoption subsidy payments, and training for adoptive families. Title IV-B, Subpart 2 focuses on pre- and post-adoption services designed to expedite the adoption process and provide support to adoptive families. As highlighted by participants, prevention-focused strategies and services are invaluable to support families post adoption. Title IV-E's Family First Prevention Services Act was recommended as a potential post-adoption solution to prevent children's re-entry into care. The Act provides families access to evidence-based services that can proactively address challenges long before dissolution. To learn more about the postpermanency support services in your state, visit the [AdoptUSKids directory](#) or National Center for Enhanced Post-Adoption Support's [Post-Permanency Profiles](#).

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Emerging from Think Tank dialogue and participant perspectives, the recommendations from the convening that are consistent with national best practices are summarized by area topic area in Table 3. This table is intended to facilitate dialogue for readers to consider which priority recommendations and accompanying strategies may be most relevant to their context, capacity and readiness for practice or policy change.

**Table 3. Summary of Policy and Practice Recommendations Emerging from Think Tank**

Breakout Room Topic	High-Level Recommendations
Consent & Consultation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaborate closely with youth with lived experience to reform existing consent/consultation policy to accomplish two primary goals:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Set expectations for informed, age-appropriate consent process</li> <li>b. Outline clear practice expectations for initial and ongoing consultation</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Create a process for automatic, periodic review of existing consents and adoption profile with the child or young person.</li> </ol>
Photolisting Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Share children’s or young people’s information securely (for example, at an in-person event by invitation, through password portals, by preventing screenshots and reverse image searches)</li> <li>2. Create policy guidance requiring security and privacy protections for listings</li> <li>3. Engage children and young people meaningfully in developing their listing and profile and encourage them to identify a trusted adult support who can assist them in creating this profile</li> <li>4. Inform children/youth of their options for photolisting/profiles and provide choice as to where it is posted</li> </ol>
Recruitment of diverse families	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish or expand child-specific, kin-first recruitment policies and practices</li> <li>2. Invest in community-centered, culturally grounded recruitment</li> <li>3. Effectively communicate community supports available before, during, and after adoption finalization</li> <li>4. Center recognition and repair of harm and trust building</li> </ol>
Retention of prospective families	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish realistic expectations around youth and family needs before, during, and after the adoption process</li> <li>2. Effectively communicate supports available before, during, and after adoption finalization</li> </ol>
Post-Adoption Supports	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish or expand peer-to-peer supports available for adoptive families</li> <li>2. Ensure families have access to resources and supports beyond the child welfare system</li> <li>3. Expand or establish economic and concrete supports for youth and families after the adoption process</li> <li>4. Invest in proactive outreach and preventive supports for post-adoptive families to identify crises early and support family stability.</li> </ol>

The remainder of this section offers detailed descriptions of the recommendations generated by the Think Tank participants.

## Consent & Consultation Recommendations

Think Tank participants recommended that states collaborate with youth who have lived experience with adoption to establish a clear, consistent consent and consultation process and policy that ensures:

- Consent and consultation are developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate.
- Informed consent is documented.
- Adoption professionals are trained to facilitate a conversation with a child or young person exploring their desire to consent to adoption, their rights and their options in the adoption consultation process.
- Consents are reviewed and re-affirmed or revised with a child or young person every 3–6 months.

**“Through youth advocacy groups, there’s an avenue for people with lived experience to work elbow to elbow with people who used to give me services.”**

**-Lived Experience Panelist**

## Photolisting Practice Recommendations

- Adoption profile access should be limited to families vetted (via background check, completion of minimum training standards, etc.) by an adoption agency or child welfare agency.
- Leverage innovative alternatives that center a child/young person’s personality, needs, and wants over their physical appearance.
- Collaborate with a trusted, trained adult support selected by the child/young person to assist in the development of a written profile, or to create an audio file interview with the child or young person.
- Ensure children/young people have developmentally appropriate decision-making power over their profiles.
- Adopt an automatic profile review every 6 months for a child or young person. Also adopt a review request process for a child or young person to request an ad hoc review, a profile update, or the removal of their profile at any time during their adoption process. Suggested timely response to review request was 5 business days.
- Collect annual survey data on young people’s satisfaction and experience with their adoption consent/consultation process and outcomes data to track the efficacy of innovative photolisting strategies.

## Targeted Recruitment Recommendations

- Ensure recruitment is driven by up-to-date data on demographics of children/young people awaiting adoption.
- Prioritize kin- and child-specific recruitment approaches and relational permanency (for example, include plans to maintain sibling relationships and strengthen connections with extended family and other significant adults).

- Leverage tools like Family Find to identify and engage relatives early in the permanency process.
- Proactively communicate and set expectations with prospective families about the adoption process and availability of supports.

## Recommendations to Support Prospective Families

- Provide clear, realistic expectations regarding children and youth's needs and information on supports available throughout the adoption journey.
- Intentionally pace delivery of education, training, and resources to ensure a family can understand the adoption process.
- Prepare families to engage in hard conversations early, and throughout the process, and acknowledge and normalize feelings of fear, grief, or loss.
- Coordinate pre- and post-adoption services to ensure continuity of support for families before crisis.
- Collect and review data on adoption disruptions to tailor enhancement of retention strategies.

## Recommendations for Post-Adoption Support

- Identify and address potential service "cliffs" an adoptive family may experience after finalization.
- Proactively conduct outreach to post-adoptive families about their options for accessible, community-based support, even if families refused services prior to adoption.
- Collect and review data on adoption dissolutions to inform targeted outreach for post-adoption support (example: Northwest Adoption Exchange issues post-adoption outreach in advance of a child's 8th, 10th and 12th birthdays).
- Comprehensive, effective post-adoption support should be available to both the family and the adoptee, including services like peer support (helplines, support groups, 1:1 mentors, etc.), family resource hubs, tuition waivers, respite care, educational/disability supports, financial support, and family/individual counseling offered by an adoption-competent provider.
- Clear workforce training and practice strategies to ensure proactive support for post-adoptive families (for example, leverage prevention plan before a family is at risk for adoption dissolution and child is at risk of re-entry into child welfare).
- Leverage available flexible funding to support post-adoptive families (Title IV-B Subpart 1, Subpart 2, Family First Prevention Services Act).

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# APPENDIX A

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## National Think Tank Core Values

Below are the outlined values of the Selfless Love Foundation, which guide their planning and execution of their National Think Tank Convening:

1. **Safety & stability:** Prioritize the safety & stability of youth in foster care, providing them with secure & consistent environments.
2. **Self-respect:** Encourage youth in foster care to develop a sense of self-respect and self-worth. Help them recognize their inherent value as individuals, irrespective of their past experiences.
3. **Empathy & compassion:** Cultivate empathy & compassion toward youth in foster care, recognizing their unique experiences and offering understanding and support.
4. **Family & belonging:** Foster a sense of belonging and connectedness for youth in foster care. Emphasize the importance of supportive relationships and the concept of “family” in various forms.
5. **Empowerment & agency:** Encourage empowerment and agency for youth in foster care, involving them in decision-making processes and supporting their autonomy.
6. **Integrity & honesty:** Promote integrity and honesty in all interactions, fostering an environment of trust and transparency.
7. **Respect for others:** Promote respect for others, including foster parents, caseworkers, and peers. Emphasize the importance of treating others with dignity and kindness.
8. **Education & growth:** Support the educational development and personal growth of youth in foster care, providing opportunities for learning and skill building.
9. **Community & diversity:** Embrace the value of community and diversity, recognizing and celebrating the differences among individuals in the foster care system.
10. **Social responsibility:** Encourage responsibility and active engagement in the community, empowering youth to make positive contributions.

# APPENDIX B

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## **Selfless Love Foundation's National Think Tank Convening Agenda**

### **DAY 1: Policy Level-Setting and Discussion of Photolisting, Consent and Consultation Strategies**

- Lived Experts Panel: Diverse Perspectives on Adoption
  - Impacts of living in the foster care system
  - Experiences of family & sibling separation
  - Importance of youth rights in adoption process
  - Ongoing healing journeys and transition into adulthood
- Presentation by Kati Mapa, CWLA and Ashley Garcia-Rivera, C.A.S.E.: Relationship Between Federal and State Adoption Policy
  - Photolistings
    - Examples and primary concerns
    - Overview of federal policy (CAPTA/ASFA/TASFA)
    - Relationship with state adoption policy
  - Federal and State Advocacy Strategies
    - Talking points for lived experts and advocates
    - Proposed language drafts
    - Examples of states that have made enhancements
- Breakout Room Sessions: Innovative Strategies to Improve Photolistings, Consent and Consultation in Adoption
  - What are photolistings, what purpose do they fulfill in the adoption process? What do they look like and what challenges and innovations exist related to their use?
  - What federal and state legal frameworks guide photolisting practice and process?
  - What does consent and consultation look like in the adoption process? What are the challenges and innovations that exist related to these practices?
  - What federal and state legal frameworks guide consent/consultation practice?

### **DAY 2: Practice Level-Setting and Discussion of Recruitment, Retention and Post-Adoption Strategies**

- Practice Presentations
  - Supporting Stability: Kori Gough, Heart Galleries of Texas
  - Promising Post-Adoption Practices: Melinda Lis and Thomas Threlkeld, National Center for Enhanced Post-Adoption Support, Spaulding for Children
- Breakout Room Session
  - Engaging diverse communities in recruitment
  - Supporting prospective adoptive families
  - Post-Adoption support
- Closing Keynote Speaker: Isaac Etter, Founder & CEO of Identify

**Day 1 and 2 Breakout Room Session Approach:** Each breakout room session included a mix of participants with lived experience in adoption or professional experience. Each session was coled by two facilitators: a lived expert and a child welfare professional. To ensure the insights and ideas of all participants were captured accurately for synthesis, each breakout session also included a trained notetaker. Following the event, notetakers coded the notes into categories of themes across breakout room topics and vetted these themes with the planning team for input.