



## TBRI® AND POST-PERMANENCY: A New Approach

Children and youth in adoptive and guardianship families face particular challenges as a result of the early trauma and adversity they have experienced. Trauma and loss can have a significant impact on children's ability to form healthy attachments and to thrive in their adoptive or guardianship families. Some approaches to post-permanency support fall short in addressing these complex needs, particularly as children navigate grief and loss and a host of other difficulties.



For state, tribal, and territorial leaders seeking to ensure the well-being and stability of children and youth in adoption and guardianship, Trust Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®) offers an evidence-based framework for effectively supporting families. By integrating TBRI® principles and practices into their post-permanency services, leaders can bring a focus on improving parent-child relationships and achieve better outcomes.

This article explores TBRI® and its use in post-permanency programs, the benefits of TBRI®, and key considerations for states, tribal nations, or territories considering implementing or expanding this approach.

## Understanding TBRI® and Its Use in Post-Permanency Programs

**TBRI®** is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBRI® uses three sets of principles:

- Empowering Principles to address physical needs
- Connecting Principles for attachment needs
- Correcting Principles to disarm fear-based behaviors

The intervention is based on years of attachment, sensory processing, and neuroscience research, and the heartbeat of TBRI® is connection.

TBRI® is designed to meet the complex needs of children who have experienced adversity, early harm, toxic stress, or trauma. Because of their histories, it can be difficult for these children to trust the loving adults in their lives, which often results in perplexing behaviors. TBRI® has been used worldwide in foster and adoptive homes, residential facilities, group homes, schools, camps, juvenile justice facilities, courts, with survivors of sex trafficking, in faith communities, with law enforcement, in clinical practices, and beyond.

Numerous sites are currently using TBRI® in their post-permanency programs. In several sites, staff become trained TBRI® Practitioners who help parents understand how to integrate the TBRI® principles into their parenting strategies. Sites also:

- provide the TBRI® Caregiver Series training and other workshops to caregivers
- offer in-home parent coaching based on TBRI® principles
- host support groups led by TBRI® Practitioners
- provide TBRI® training or consultation to other professionals to improve their support of adoptive and guardianship families

To learn more about how specific sites use TBRI®, search for TBRI in the [post-permanency profiles](#) on the Post-Adoption Center’s website.

### Benefits of TBRI®

Integrating TBRI® into a site’s post-permanency program has many benefits, including:

- **Ensuring Care Is Trauma-Informed:** TBRI® equips both caregivers and staff with a deep understanding of the impact of trauma on children’s development and behavior. By integrating trauma-informed practices into post-permanency services, sites can better help children and youth to heal from past experiences.

**“Implementing TBRI® in post-permanency services transforms how we support families after adoption or guardianship. TBRI® helps caregivers understand and respond to their children’s needs more effectively, creating stronger family bonds and promoting long-term stability and success.”**

**— Michelle Warner, LMSW,  
TBRI® Practitioner**

- **Strengthening Attachments:** Building strong, trust-based relationships is essential for the well-being of families created by adoption or guardianship. TBRI® is grounded in practical techniques for promoting attachment and bonding, laying the foundation for healthy development and resilience.
- **Improving Behaviors:** Many children and youth in adoption and guardianship exhibit challenging behaviors resulting from trauma-related issues such as fear, anxiety, and difficulty regulating emotions. Their parents and caregivers often struggle to respond and may be using parenting approaches that cause further harm. TBRI® offers a toolbox of strategies for managing trauma-based behaviors, which allows parents to help foster a sense of safety and security for the child or youth.
- **Enhancing Support for Caregivers:** TBRI® not only equips caregivers with practical parenting skills but can also provide them with a supportive community of professionals and peers who offer guidance and encouragement along the way. Having an informed, understanding community is vital when friends and community members are often advocating for traditional caregiving approaches that fail to meet the needs of children and youth in adoption and guardianship.
- **Improving Long-Term Stability:** By addressing the underlying needs of children and youth and strengthening family relationships, TBRI® can contribute to greater stability and well-being. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood of discontinuity and foster care reentry.
- **Addressing Cultural Sensitivity:** TBRI® emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting the cultural backgrounds of children and families. This is critically important in successfully serving the diverse communities in adoption and guardianship.



**“I’d like to share my experience of utilizing TBRI® and the value it brings to the clients whom we work with. I utilize TBRI® principles through in-home consultation in post-adoption. I’ve seen parents respond and connect with the model and its principles, most notably the efforts in connecting and allowing the child’s body to calm before offering correction. I believe mindfully interactive parenting models grounding behavior for children, who have unfortunately more often have not experienced this in their formative years. Having strategies that cover a wide range of needs in the child’s environment in a sensory manner, physically through nutrition and emotionally through regulation are helpful tools. I am supportive of this model.”**

**— Utah Clinical Post Adoption Specialist**

## Considerations for Implementation

While the benefits of implementing TBRI® are clear, to ensure success, states, tribal nations, or territories must consider several factors when integrating this approach into their post-permanency services:

- **Training and Capacity Building:** To successfully implement TBRI®, sites must invest in comprehensive training and ongoing support for professionals and caregivers. This investment ensures everyone involved has the necessary knowledge and skills to implement TBRI® effectively. Additional capacity building is also necessary to sustain effective implementation including creating infrastructure to support ongoing education, providing access to necessary resources, and establishing a network for collaboration and consultation for both caregivers and staff. By enhancing capacity, sites can maintain the fidelity of TBRI® practices, address challenges proactively, and ensure long-term success and positive outcomes for children and families.
- **Resource Allocation:** Implementing TBRI® requires a thoughtful approach to resource allocation to ensure effectiveness and sustainability. This may include securing funding to cover training, materials, and program development, as well as hiring and retaining qualified staff who are adequately trained in TBRI®. Infrastructure support is also crucial, such as providing technology for data collection and administrative resources to manage the program. Sites should strategically plan for these needs, prioritizing investments that will enhance their capacity to deliver TBRI® consistently and effectively, ensuring a long-term positive impact on adoptive and guardianship families.
- **Collaboration and Coordination:** Implementing TBRI® often requires collaboration and coordination across multiple systems and agencies involved in providing post-permanency supports. Site leaders may want to share information about TBRI® with or provide TBRI® training to mental health providers, medical professionals, schools, residential facilities, and others. This ensures that all of the systems from which adoptive and guardianship families may seek support truly understand TBRI® and embrace its principles.

- **Tailoring to Cultural Context:** States, tribal nations, and territories need to be mindful of implementing TBRI® in a way that respects and reflects the full cultural and linguistic diversity of their site's adoptive and guardianship population. Leaders should consider cultural factors and community norms during implementation to ensure that TBRI® is culturally responsive and inclusive.
- **Evaluation and Quality Assurance:** To ensure the effectiveness of TBRI® implementation and maintain fidelity to the model, it is vital to establish robust monitoring and evaluation processes. Sites should implement mechanisms for data collection, process and outcome measurement, and identification of areas for improvement. By paying attention to continuous quality improvement and evaluation, sites will ensure the best possible implementation of TBRI® and will be able to assess how it is helping children and families.

## Conclusion

By addressing the unique needs of children who have experienced trauma and adversity, evidence shows that TBRI® has the potential to improve outcomes and promote stability. Sites that thoughtfully add TBRI® to their post-permanency programs can create more nurturing and supportive family environments, ultimately contributing to better outcomes for children and stronger, more resilient communities.

**To delve further into this topic, check out the Post-Adoption Center Resource Library:**  
[www.postadoptioncenter.org/resource-library](http://www.postadoptioncenter.org/resource-library)



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