Graduate Study In Marriage and Family Therapy

ROBERT F. STAHMANN AND JOE EDGAR GLENN

What is Marriage and Family Therapy?

Marriage and family therapy (MFT) is the youngest and most rapidly growing of the mental health professions (American Psychological Association, 1986). MFT was formally acknowledged as a mental health discipline in 1978 when the United States Office of Health, Education and Welfare recognized the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education as the official accrediting body for MFT. "Marriage and family therapy means the process of providing professional psychotherapy to individuals, married couples, and family groups, either singly, or in groups. Marriage and family therapy includes individual, premarital, marital, divorce and family therapy, and is a specialized mode of treatment for the purpose of resolving emotional disorders, modifying interpersonal and intrapersonal dysfunction and promoting mental health" (Utah Marriage and Family Therapist Licensing Act, 1987).

It would appear that the rapid growth in MFT has been related to, in part, to the recognition that many mental health problems are due to problematic or dysfunctional interpersonal relationships. Clinical practice and research have shown that changes made in dysfunctional relationships are best treated by working with those persons in the relationship, the entire system (see Gurman & Kniskern, 1981, for a thorough review of family therapy outcome literature). The patient is the couple or family and the therapeutic focus is on interpersonal interaction rather than on an individual as the identified patient.

Marriage and family therapists are trained in the diagnosis and treatment of mental and nervous disorders, as are other mental health professional such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers. However, marriage and family therapists have specialized training and knowledge in such areas as human growth and development, marital and family interaction, sexual dysfunction, parent-child relationships, and the dynamics of family systems (Commission on Accreditation, 1988). This training gives MFTs a particularly appropriate basis for helping people, (individuals, couples, families) deal with normal developmental stages such as pre-marriage, marital adjustment, children moving from childhood to adolescence, or adults moving from productive employment into retirement. MFTs also work with problems and crises such as death in the family, unexpected illness, divorce, alcoholism and/or substance abuse, unemployment, child and/or spouse abuse.

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Who is a Marriage and Family Therapist?

Currently (early 1989) there are 18 states that regulate MFT as a profession with licensure or certification of Marriage and Family Therapists. These states are Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Each state requires the minimum of a master's degree in MFT or its equivalent plus supervised clinical experience.

A professional organization, the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), has established the category of clinical member with requirements that help the public and other professionals identify persons who have been appropriately trained in MFT. AAMFT clinical members have a minimum of a master's degree including specific graduate training in marital and family therapy, and also have completed at least two years of supervised clinical practice with couples and families. In addition, clinical members of AAMFT meet applicable state licensure or certification requirements. MFTs observe a strict ethical code created by AAMFT and freely give information about their training, experience, theoretical orientation, length of treatment, goals of therapy, and fees (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 1988).

How Does One Get Into a Graduate MFT Program?

We have already established that a master's degree is required to practice MFT. While it is possible to get a master's degree in a field related to MFT and then "add on" MFT coursework in order to eventually meet MFT practice requirements, our discussion is focused on graduate study in MFT. What we present here also applies to getting into doctoral level MFT graduate work.

The application process at different graduate schools will vary and a prospective student should write to specific schools of interest in order to obtain specific information and application forms. We suggest doing this early enough in the undergraduate training in order to allow time to take specific courses that may be required or suggested for admission. A listing of schools with MFT graduate programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COA) is presented here. These accredited programs have solid curriculum offerings and supervised clinical practica which have been reviewed and judged against high standards. However, because the MFT field is in a growth period, there are some good graduate programs in development that are not currently on this list. If a prospective student is interested in a particular graduate school but does not know whether it offers MFT training, such information can be obtained by addressing a letter of inquiry to the "Marriage and Family Therapy Graduate Program" at the school's address. The letter may find its way to the appropriate academic department. A current listing of accredited graduate and post degree programs may be obtained from the COA at the address below.

The current MFT graduate programs accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education are shown in Table 1. A current list of graduate programs can be obtained from the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 1717 K Street, NW, Suite 407, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 429-1825.
Table 1. Accredited Graduate Clinical Training Programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City, State, Zip</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abilene Christian University (M.A.)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Dr. Tom Milholland</td>
<td>Abilene, TX 79699</td>
<td>(915) 674-2000</td>
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<td>Auburn University (M.S.)</td>
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<td>Dr. Connie J. Salts</td>
<td>Auburn, AL 36849</td>
<td>(205) 826-4478</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butler University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr. Mariellen Griffith</td>
<td>Indianapolis, IN</td>
<td>(317) 283-9329</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Bridgeport (M.S.)</td>
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<td>Dr. Dominic Dimattia</td>
<td>Bridgeport, CT 06601</td>
<td>(203) 576-4175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigham Young University (M.S.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr. D. Russell Crane</td>
<td>Provo, UT 84602</td>
<td>(801) 378-3888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Connecticut</td>
<td></td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>Dr. Stephen A. Anderson</td>
<td>Storrs, CT 06268</td>
<td>(203) 486-3865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuller Theological Seminary (M.A.)</td>
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<td>Dr. Dennis B. Guernsey</td>
<td>Pasadena, CA 91182</td>
<td>(818) 584-5330</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hahnemann University (M.F.T.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr. Bruce Lackie</td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>(215) 448-7261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Houston at Clear Lake (M.A.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Uri Rueveni</td>
<td>Houston, TX 77058</td>
<td>(713) 488-9310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana State Univ (M.S.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Elizabeth Schilson</td>
<td>Terre Haute, IN 47809</td>
<td>(812) 237-2867</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kansas State University</td>
<td>Dr. Candyce S. Russell, Dept. of Human Development &amp; Family Studies, Marriage &amp; Family Therapy Program, Justin Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506, (913) 532-55102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loma Linda University</td>
<td>Dr. Mary Moline, Department of Social Relations, Marriage and Family Therapy Program, Loma Linda, CA 92350, (714) 824-4547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland</td>
<td>Dr. Ned L. Gaylin, Dept. of Family and Community Dev., Marie Mount Hall, Room 1204D, College Park, MD 20742, (301) 454-2142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast Louisiana University</td>
<td>Dr. Donald W. Locke, Marriage and Family Counseling Program, Monroe, LA 71209-0280, (318) 342-4075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Illinois University</td>
<td>Dr. Anthony Heath, Dept. of Human and Family Resources, DeKalb, IL 60115, (815) 753-1196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Lady of the Lake University</td>
<td>Dr. Glen Gardner, 411 SW 24th Street, San Antonio, TX 78285, (512) 434-6711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Rhode Island</td>
<td>Dr. Peter Maynard, Marriage and Family Counseling Program, Transition Ctr/Lower Campus Rd, Kingston, RI 02881, (401) 792-2440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Connecticut State University</td>
<td>Barbara Lynch, M.A., 501 Crescent Street, New Haven, CT 06515, (203) 397-4689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary's University</td>
<td>Dr. Rick Bruhn, Family Life Center, One Camino Santa Maria, San Antonio, TX 78284, (512) 436-3133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syracuse University</td>
<td>Dr. Eleanor D. Macklin, College of Human Development, 008 Slocum Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244-1250, (315) 423-3023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Tech University</td>
<td>Dr. Linda Little, Department of Family and Child Development, Northern Virginia Graduate Center, 2990 Telestar Court, Falls Church, VA 22042, (703) 698-6037</td>
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Table 1. (continued) Accredited Graduate Clinical Training Programs.

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<tr>
<th>University</th>
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<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-STOUT (M.S.)</td>
<td>Dr. Charles Barnard Marriage and Family Therapy School of Ed. &amp; Human Services Menomonie, WI 54751 (715) 232-2404</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIV. (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Dr. D. Russell Crane Department of Family Sciences Marriage &amp; Fam. Counseling Clinic, 274 TLRB Provo, UT 84602 (801) 378-3888</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLORIDA STATE UNIV. (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Dr. Lucy B. Kizirian Interdivisional Program in Marriage and Family Dept. of Home &amp; Family Life Tallahassee, FL 32306 (904) 644-2003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIV. OF GEORGIA (Ph.D)</td>
<td>Dr. William H. Quinn McPhaul Child &amp; Family Development Center Athens, GA 30602 (404) 542-4923</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KANSAS STATE UNIV. (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Dr. Candyce S. Russell Dept. of Human Development &amp; Family Studies Marriage and Family Therapy Program Justin Hall Manhattan, KS 66506 (913) 532-5510</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIV OF MINNESOTA (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Dr. William J. Doherty Family Social Science 290 McNeal Hall 1985 Buford Avenue St. Paul, MN 55108 (612) 625-1900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURDUE UNIVERSITY (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Dr. Douglas H. Sprenkle Marriage and Family Therapy Building 523 Russell Street West Lafayette, IN 47906 (317) 494-2952</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Dr. Carlfred B. Broderick Dept. of Sociology Los Angeles, CA 90089-0032 (213) 743-2137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEXAS TECH UNIV (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Dr. Karen S. Wampler Dept. of Human Development and Family Studies PO Box 4170 Lubbock, TX 79409 (806) 742-3000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIRGINIA TECH UNIV (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Dr. James F. Keller Dept. of Family and Child Development Marriage and Family Therapy Blacksburg, VA 24061 (703) 961-7201</td>
<td></td>
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In applying for graduate school, first be aware that the application deadline is usually during the winter before the academic year that the student will begin the program. Thus, it will likely be that all materials such as application forms, transcripts, letters of reference, GRE test scores, etc. will be due to the graduate school in January or February. Plan early!

As suggested previously, it is wise for a prospective student to correspond with MFI programs of interest during the junior year of undergraduate work. This gives time to meet specific course requirements, learn details of the graduate program, and meet the application deadline. Most MFT programs begin the academic program each fall and require full-time study. This is the case because the combination of didactic and clinical work in the MFT curriculum is very demanding of time and intellect.

Admission is usually competitive with many more applicants than students admitted. While didactic courses in the MFT curriculum can serve 15-25 students, the practicum courses must be limited to no more than six students per faculty member in order to provide adequate supervision of clinical work with clients. Thus, a prospective student may be well advised to apply to more than a single graduate program. Specific areas that graduate admissions committees are likely to consider are:

1. Undergraduate major in the social sciences or at least a concentration of coursework that includes the prerequisites for that particular graduate program.
2. Grade point average (GPA) of at least a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Often graduate schools look at GPA on the most recent 60 semester/quarter hours of coursework as well as overall GPA.
3. Letters of reference are important because they can provide various views of past and potential performance. Obtain them from a variety of people who can give information about interpersonal qualities as well as academic performance and potential.
4. It is likely that an admissions exam such as the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) or Miller Analogies Test (MAT) will be required. Find this out in time to prepare for the test and take it so that the results will be available to the graduate admissions committee on time.
5. Often a letter of intent or interest is required. Sometimes a biographical sketch is asked for. Admissions committees find these useful in helping to determine whether the graduate program will likely meet the prospective student's goals and interests. Thus, these statements should be carefully and honestly written by the prospective student.
6. Some graduate schools require the prospective student to visit the campus for an interview. We believe, whether required or not, it is a good idea for the student to make such a visit to enable the student to get a feel for the faculty and graduate program. It also obviously gives the faculty a chance to see the prospective graduate student as more than an application file. Students can prepare by thinking of questions about the school, curriculum, professional activities of recent MFT graduates, etc. Be sure to schedule an appointment with the faculty, rather than just "drop in."
7. While the application may not require a resumé, we suggest that a student submit one as part of the application materials. Remember, the task of the admissions committee is to know the student through the application materials submitted. A resumé, well thought out and written, is useful and impressive.

What is the Graduate School Curriculum?

Of course there are individual differences in the MFT graduate curriculum at different schools. Variations are based upon the specific goals of the school or state
licensing requirements. Yet, the following curriculum, based upon AAMFT guidelines, is typical of most offered in a two-year master's degree program (AAMFT, 1988).

1. Marital and Family Studies (3 courses)
   Family development and family interactional patterns across the life cycle of the individuals as well as the family. Courses may include the study of: family life cycle; theories of family development; marriage and/or the family; sociology of the family; families under stress; the contemporary family; family in a social context; the cross-cultural family; youth/adult/aging and the family; family subsystems; individual, interpersonal relationships (marital, parental, sibling).

2. Marital and Family Therapy (3 courses)
   Family therapy methodology; family assessment; treatment and intervention methods; overview of major clinical theories of marital and family therapy such as: communications, contextual, experiential, object relations, strategic, structural, systemic, transgenerational.

3. Human Development (3 courses)
   Human development; personality theory; human sexuality; psychopathology; behavior-pathology.

4. Professional Studies (1 course)
   Professional socialization and the role of the professional organization; legal responsibilities and liabilities; independent practice and interprofessional cooperation; ethics; family law.

5. Research (1 course)
   Research design; methods, statistics; research in marital and family studies and therapy.

6. Clinical Practicum (1 year, 300 hours)
   15 hours per week, approximately 8-10 hours in face-to-face contact with individuals, couples, and families for the purpose of assessment, diagnosis, and treatment.

Often a master's thesis and other courses are required to complete the graduate degree. Thus, a master's degree in MFT may require 40 to 50 or more semester hours. Remember also, that prior to licensure or certification by a state or the obtaining of AAMFT clinical membership, supervised post-degree clinical practice must be obtained. Generally this is a two-year process involving at least 1,000 hours of face-to-face contact with couples and families for the purpose of assessment and treatment, and 200 hours of supervision of MFT, at least 100 of which are individual supervision.

**What About Financial and Time Requirements for Marriage and Family Therapy Education?**

It is important for potential students in marriage and family therapy (or any other professional program) to realize that graduate education is an expensive undertaking. The exact costs vary among different training programs, particularly in regard to tuition. Therefore this paper cannot provide exact dollar figures for MFT training cost. Our goal is to provide some guidelines for planning the financial aspects of MFT education, particularly those things that current MFT students have stated that they wished they had been aware of before starting their training.

The per semester or per credit hour tuition costs for graduate education are almost universally higher than the corresponding undergraduate tuition costs. MFT students receive a great deal of individual instruction from professors. Use of this valuable commodity is one of the major reasons for the increased tuition costs. It is important to ask for specific tuition cost information when inquiring about a training program in
which you are interested. Also keep in mind that MFT education usually continues year around, so plan for the added tuition costs of school during the summer.

Housing is a major expense for graduate students. Be aware that housing costs can vary considerably throughout the United States. Many students relocate to other parts of the country to attend graduate programs. Learning the local housing markets will be an important part of your visit to a potential training program.

Most universities have on-campus housing for both single and married students. Such housing is usually less expensive than comparable off-campus housing. However, many universities have a waiting list for on-campus housing, another reason for planning ahead in your program selection. The university housing office will also have listings for off-campus housing if that is a preference.

Many MFT students are surprised at the cost of the required books for MFT education. Book publishers can sell thousands of introductory-level textbooks, thus lowering the per unit cost of such books. Only a comparative handful of students need graduate-level books. Also, MFT books are considered "professional" books rather than "text" books by the publishers. Books in the $30.00 to $65.00 range are not unusual, so be prepared!

The above mentioned items are the major financial expenses of MFT education. There are other "expenses" and "investments" to consider. Time is an important non-financial expense that many MFT students fail to consider before beginning their training. Graduate education is extremely time-consuming. The student has the usual demands of class attendance and preparation, research activities (thesis or dissertation), and often assistantship duties on their time. While graduate students in almost any discipline have these same demands, MFT students have the additional requirement of client interaction. AAMFT requirements state that students at the master's level will complete 500 hours of face-to-face contact with clients in their training. When the time necessary for the associated case planning, record keeping, and supervision is added, 10 to 14 hour work days are not uncommon for MFT students.

This level of involvement will cut significantly into the amount of time available for personal and family activities. The student will need the support and understanding of significant others, such as spouse or children, in order to be successful.

Many MFT programs (and the universities with which they are affiliated) offer assistantships to their students. An assistantship most often consists of helping a professor with various aspects of a research project or teaching associated undergraduate classes. These assistantships offer the student an opportunity to earn money while gaining valuable experience that will help build a professional career. The graduate programs in which students are interested can provide information concerning the availability and amount of assistantships. Be aware that assistantships are usually not provided for every semester of the student's education.

It is possible to get an MFT graduate education even if you are not wealthy. There are many sources of income available to the student. Learning what they are and how to obtain them is an important part of being an effective graduate student. One note of caution: the widely used Pell grants are NOT available to graduate students, so do not count on this source of revenue.

While Pell grants are not available to graduate students, government-sponsored student loans are available. Guaranteed Student Loans (GSL) may be obtained by graduate students. GSL loan forms may be found at virtually all college or university financial aid offices. They are an excellent source of information concerning loan rates.
and limitations that apply to each individual student's situation. GSL's are a legal obligation that must be repaid, so careful use of this funding source is important.

Many college and universities offer grants and scholarships to their graduate students. This is a valuable source of financial aid for graduate students and should not be overlooked. There are usually specific requirements and deadlines associated with grants and scholarships that should be incorporated into planning an MFT education. Special grants and scholarships are often available to women and minorities. Marriage and family therapy, as a profession, is committed to attracting women and minorities, so be sure to explore these funding sources if you qualify in either category.

Another often under-utilized source of income is a research grant. While it is true that most research money goes to established professionals, there are often funding sources that support student research. If a thesis or dissertation is part of the requirements for a degree in a specific MFT program, investigate what sources of funding are available for student research. This information is often not as readily available as that concerning other income sources, but is worth the time required to locate it. The graduate program can supply this information.

Last, but not least, many MFT students work part-time (other than assistantships) to finance their education. Most schools have information concerning work available on campus or in the community. Work is an additional demand on a student's time and another drain on the time available for social and family activities. Careful planning is also needed to facilitate working while learning the profession of marriage and family therapy.

Marriage and family therapy is a difficult, demanding, expensive, and time-consuming profession to learn. Prepare thoroughly and carefully for the financial, living, and time aspects of MFT training. Many difficulties can be avoided by doing so.

What Job Opportunities are Available for Marriage and Family Therapists?

Marriage and family therapists are finding employment in a world of ever-expanding opportunities. Many marriage and family therapists are self-employed, developing private practices that are both professional and financially rewarding. The public demand for the services provided by marriage and family therapists is continuing to grow at a rapid rate.

Other marriage and family therapists find employment opportunities in public and private hospitals where their services are in demand in adult, child, and adolescent treatment units, as well as other traditional mental health settings such as community mental health clinics.

As alcohol and substance abuse have become to be seen as a "family" problem, marriage and family therapists (with proper training and skills) have made a significant impact in the area of alcohol and substance abuse treatment. Breaking the cyclical and mutually reinforcing patterns of an alcoholic family is work well suited to the trained and motivated marriage and family therapist.

More and more opportunities for employment are being found in the business sector. Family therapists are making significant inroads in staffing corporate Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's) that provide employees with counseling that helps them be productive on and off the job. Often, marriage and family therapists will act as independent consultants to businesses, providing them with the expert knowledge of how systems work and how they can be improved.

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Of course, as the demand for marriage and family therapists grows, so does the demand for those people with the skills to teach others to be therapists. Academic jobs (teaching, supervision, and research in the field) require a doctoral-level degree. For those with the appropriate training and skills, academic careers are currently available and are highly sought after positions.

What professional Organizations are Available for Marriage and Family Therapists and Students?

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT)
1717 K Street, N.W.
Suite 107
Washington, D.C. 20006

For more than 40 years the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) has been involved with the problems, needs and changing patterns of marital and family relationships. This professional association leads the way to increasing understanding, research, and education in the field of marital and family therapy, and ensuring that public needs are met by practitioners of the highest quality. AAMFT advocates that therapists with specific education and training in marital and family therapy provide the most effective mental health care to couples and families.

AAMFT is the professional organization representing marital and family therapists in the United States and Canada with a few of its members residing throughout the world. AAMFT divisions are active at state and provincial level, providing conferences for professional interchange and training, public advocacy on marital and family professional issues, as well as opportunities for referral.

The more than 15,000 members of AAMFT have met rigorous educational and training requirements—now recognized as the standard in the field. Members of the Association are professionals who work with marital and family systems. AAMFT's goal is to promote the practice and the profession of marital and family therapy.

National Council of Family Relations (NCFR)
1910 West Country Road B, Suite 147
St. Paul, MN 55113 - 5493

NCFR is an excellent organization that deals with family research, theory, practice, and public policy. Marriage and family therapy concerns are strongly represented in the Family Therapy Section of NCFR.

American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT)
Eleven Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 220
Washington, D.C. 20036

AASECT is a professional organization that certifies sex educators, counselors, and therapists in relation to high standards of training and experience. In this regard it is similar to AAMFT.

There are student membership categories for AAMFT, AASECT and NCFR. We encourage MFT students to join them in order to learn more about their professional field while they are in training for their graduate degree.
The American Family Therapy Association is a professional interest group for the promotion of family therapy. AFTA works to promote the use of family therapy as a treatment modality. The association is also involved in providing quality family therapy training, but does not act as an accreditation-conferring group as does the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

Other mental health professions and their related professional associations in such fields as social work and psychology may include marriage and family therapy as an area in which some members do clinical work. Because this paper presents MFT as a primary mental health discipline rather than as a sub-specialty, these related fields and professional associations are not discussed here.

What Books Can Give an Overview of MFT?

Gurman, A. S. & Kniskern, D. P. (Eds.). (1981). Handbook of family therapy. New York: Brunner/Mazel. This landmark work will provide the interested student with detailed information on marriage and family therapy. Contributors include many of the major authors in the field, with every major theoretical orientation discussed.

Hoffman, L. (1981). Foundations of family therapy. New York: Basic Books. This is an excellent book that provides an overview of systems theory and how it has been adapted to MFT. Also included in this book is a brief history of the field of marriage and family therapy and how systems theory has provided a foundation for the establishment of a new mental health discipline.

Minuchin, S. (1974). Families and family therapy. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Although now somewhat dated, this classic book will allow you to read the thoughts and ideas of one of the acknowledged masters of family therapy. It is exciting to see how Minuchin builds his concepts and then applies them to work with actual families.

Nichols, M. P. (1984). Family therapy: Concepts and methods. New York: Gardner Press. Here is an in-depth but very readable book that covers the history of MFT, the major characters in the development of MFT, as well as a presentation of the major theories of MFT. Of potential interest to those considering a career in MFT are excellent discussions of what marriage and family therapists actually do.

Piercy, F. P. & Sprenkle, D. H. (1986). Family therapy sourcebook. New York: Guilford Press. This is an excellent book for potential MFT students to read because many of the techniques used to teach marriage and family therapy are discussed and explained.

Stahmann, R. F. & Hiebert, W. J. (Eds.). (1984). Counseling in marital and sexual problems: A clinician's handbook. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books. This book focuses on treating couples, an important part of the work of a marriage and family therapist. You will be able to get a better feel for the variety of problems MFTs are trained to deal with. Included in the book are excellent discussions of dealing with divorcing couples, childless couples, alcoholism, extramarital affairs, hypnosis, sexual dysfunction, premarital counseling, intergenerational consultation, and other diverse and important topics.
REFERENCES


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Finally ... a book devoted solely to the marital and family concerns of rural Americans...

**FAMILIES IN RURAL AMERICA: STRESS, ADAPTATION AND REVITALIZATION**

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Foreword by Hamilton I. McCubbin and Charles R. Figley

**Selected Topics**

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- Unemployment and Underemployment
- Marital Quality and Labor Involvement
- Rural/Urban Family Comparisons
- Empowering Farm Families
- Parent-Child Relationships
- Isolation and Farm Loss
- Farm Families in Crisis
- Work and Family Roles
- Predictors of Distress
- Policy Implications
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